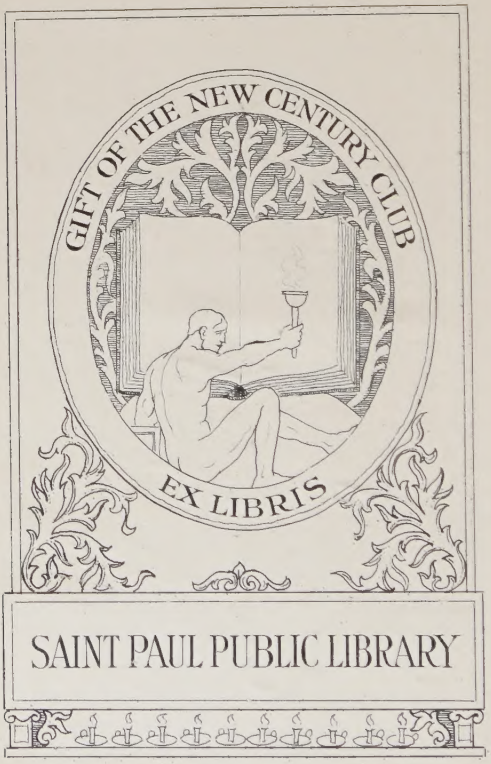
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A. H. Ritchie Sc.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

A LIFETIME,

OR

MEN AND THINGS I HAVE SEEN:

IN A SERIES OF

FAMILIAR LETTERS TO A FRIEND,

HISTORICAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, ANECDOTICAL, AND DESCRIPTIVE.

BY S. G. GOODRICH.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK AND AUBURN:

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The first Letter in the ensuing pages will inform the reader as to the origin of these volumes, and the leading ideas of the author in writing them. It is necessary to state, however, that although the work was begun two years since—as indicated by the date of the first of these Letters, and while the author was residing abroad—a considerable portion of it has been written within the last year, and since his return to America. This statement is necessary, in order to explain several passages which will be found scattered through its pages.

New York, September, 1856.

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From the Medallion presented to him by the American citizens in Paris, —on steel, engraved by Ritchie.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A LIFETIME,

IN A SERIES OF

FAMILIAR LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

LETTER I.

Introductory and Explanatory.

My dear C******

A little thin sheet of paper, with a frail wafer seal, and inscribed with various hieroglyphical symbols, among which I see the postmark of Albany, has just been laid upon my table. I have opened it, and find it to be a second letter from you. Think of the pilgrimage of this innocent waif, unprotected save by faith in man and the mail, setting out upon a voyage from the banks of the Hudson, and coming straight to me at Courbevoie, just without the walls of Paris, a distance of three thousand miles!

And yet this miracle is wrought every day, every hour. I am lingering here, partly because I have taken a lease of a house and furnished it, and therefore I can not well afford to leave it at present. I am pursuing my literary labors, and such are the fa-

cilities of intercourse, by means of these little red-lipped messengers, like this I have just received from you, that I can almost as well prosecute my labors here as at home. Could I get rid of all those associations which bind a man to his birth-land; could I appease that consciousness which whispers in my ear, that the allegiance of every true man, free to follow his choice, is due to his country and his kindred, I might perhaps continue here for the remainder of my life.

My little pavilion, situated upon an elevated slope formed of the upper bank of the Seine, gives me a view of the unrivaled valley that winds between Saint Cloud and Asnières; it shows me Paris in the near distance—Montmartre to the left, and the Arch of Triumph to the right. In the rear, close at hand, is our suburban village, having the aspect of a little withered city. Around are several chateaus, and from the terraced roof of my house—which is arranged for a promenade—I can look into their gardens and pleasure-grounds, sparkling with fountains and glowing with fruits and flowers. A walk of a few rods brings me to the bank of the Seine, where boatmen are ever ready to give the pleasure-seeker a row or a sail; in ten minutes by rail, or an hour on foot, I can be in Paris. In about the same time I may be sauntering in the Avenue de Neuilly, the Bois de Boulogne, or the galleries of Versailles. My rent is but about four hundred dollars a year, with the freedom of the gar-

dens and grounds of the chateau, of which my residence is an appendage. It is the nature of this climate to bring no excessive cold and no extreme heat. You may sit upon the grass till midnight of a summer evening, and fear no chills or fever; no troops of flies, instinctively knowing your weak point, settle upon your nose and disturb your morning nap or your afternoon siesta; no elvish mosquitoes invade the sanctity of your sleep, and force you to listen to their detestable serenade, and then make you pay for it, as if you had ordered the entertainment. If there be a place on earth combining economy and comfort—where one may be quiet, and yet in the very midst of life—it is here. Why, then, should I not remain? In one word, because I would rather be at home. This is, indeed, a charming country, but it is not mine. I could never reconcile myself to the idea of spending my life in a foreign land.

I am therefore preparing to return to New York the next summer, with the intention of making that city my permanent residence. In the mean time, I am not idle, for, as you know, the needs of my family require me to continue grinding at the mill. Besides one or two other trifling engagements, *I have actually determined upon carrying out your suggestion, that I should write a memoir of my life and times*—a panorama of my observations and experience. You encourage me with the idea that an account of my life, common-place as it has been, will find readers,

and at the same time, your recommendation naturally suggests a form in which this may be given to the public, divested of the air of egotism which generally belongs to autobiography. I may write my history in the form of letters to you, and thus tell a familiar story in a familiar way—to an old friend.

I take due note of what you recommend—that I should make my work essentially a personal narrative. You suggest that so long as the great study of mankind is man, so long any life—supposing it to be not positively vicious—if truly and frankly portrayed, will prove amusing, perhaps instructive. I admit the force of this, and it has its due influence upon me; but still I shall not make my book, either wholly or mainly, a personal memoir. I have no grudges to gratify, no by-blows to give, no apologies to make, no explanations to offer—at least none which could reasonably find place in a work like this. I have no ambition which could be subserved by a publication of a merely personal nature: to confess the truth, I should rather feel a sense of humiliation at appearing thus in print, as it would inevitably suggest the idea of pretense beyond performance.

What I propose is this: venturing to presume upon your sympathy thus far, I invite you to go with me, in imagination, over the principal scenes I have witnessed, while I endeavor to make you share in the impressions they produced upon my own mind. Thus I shall carry you back to my early days, to my native

village, the "sweet Auburn" of my young fancy, and present to you the homely country life in which I was born and bred. Those pastoral scenes were epics to my childhood; and though the heroes and heroines consisted mainly of the deacons of my father's church and the school-ma'ams that taught me to read and write, I shall still hope to inspire you with a portion of the loving reverence with which I regard their memories. I shall endeavor to interest you in some of the household customs of our New England country life, fifty years ago, when the Adams delved and the Eves span, and thought it no stain upon their gentility. I shall let you into the intimacy of my boyhood, and permit you to witness my failures as well as my triumphs. In this the first stage of my career, I shall rely upon your good nature, in permitting me to tell my story in my own way. If I make these early scenes and incidents the themes of a little moralizing, I hope for your indulgence.

From this period, as the horizon of my experience becomes somewhat enlarged, I may hope to interest you in the topics that naturally come under review. As you are well acquainted with the outline of my life, I do not deem it necessary to forewarn you that my history presents little that is out of the beaten track of common experience. I have no marvels to tell, no secrets to unfold, no riddles to solve. It is true that in the course of a long and busy career, I have seen a variety of men and things, and had my share

of vicissitudes in the shifting drama of life; still the interest of my story must depend less upon the importance of my revelations than the sympathy which naturally belongs to a personal narrative. I am perfectly aware that in regard to many of the events I shall have occasion to describe, many of the scenes I shall portray, many of the characters I shall bring upon the stage, my connection was only that of a spectator; nevertheless, I shall hope to impart to them a certain life and reality by arranging them continuously upon the thread of my remembrances.

This, then, is my preface; as the wind and weather of my humor shall favor, I intend to proceed and send you letter by letter as I write. After a few specimens, I shall ask your opinion; if favorable, I shall go on, if otherwise, I shall abandon the enterprise. I am determined, if I publish the work, to make you responsible for my success before the public.

S. G. Goodrich.

Courbevoie, near Paris, June, 1854.

LETTER II.

Geography and Chronology — The Old Brown House—Grandfathers—Ridgefield—The Meeting-House—Parson Mead—Keeler's Tavern—Lieutenant Smith—The Cannon-Ball.

My dear C******

It is said that geography and chronology are the two eyes of history: hence, I suppose that in any narrative which pretends to be in some degree historical, the when and where, as well as the how, should be distinctly presented. I am aware that a large part of mankind are wholly deficient in the bump of locality, and march through the world in utter indifference as to whether they are going north or south, east or west. With these, the sun may rise and set as it pleases, at any point of the compass; but for myself, I could never be happy, even in my bedroom or study, without knowing which way was north. You will expect, therefore, that in beginning my story, I make you distinctly acquainted with the place where I was born, as well as the objects which immediately surrounded it. If, indeed, throughout my narrative, I habitually regard geography and chronology as essential elements of a story, you will at least understand that it is done by design and not by accident.

In the western part of the State of Connecticut, is

a small town by the name of Ridgefield.* This title is descriptive, and indicates the general form and position of the place. It is, in fact, a collection of hills, rolled into one general and commanding elevation. On the west is a ridge of mountains, forming the boundary between the States of Connecticut and New York; to the south the land spreads out in wooded undulations to Long Island Sound; east and north, a succession of hills, some rising up against the sky, and others fading away in the distance, bound the horizon. In this town, in an antiquated and rather dilapidated house of shingles and clapboards, I was born on the 19th of August, 1793.

My father, Samuel Goodrich, was minister of the First Congregational Church of that place, there being then, no other religious society and no other clergyman in the town, except at Ridgebury—the remote northern section, which was a separate parish. He was the son of Elizur Goodrich,† a distinguished minister of the same persuasion, at Durham, Connecticut. Two of his brothers were men of eminence—the late Chauncey Goodrich of Hartford, and Elizur Goodrich of New Haven. My mother was a daughter of John Ely,‡ a physician of Saybrook, whose name figures not unworthily in the annals of the revolutionary war.

I was the sixth child of a family of ten children,

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* See Note I., p. 515. † See Note II., p. 523. ‡ See Note III., p. 533.

two of whom died in infancy, and eight of whom lived to be married and settled in life. All but two of the latter are still living. My father's annual salary for the first twenty-five years, and during his ministry at Ridgefield, averaged £120, old currency—that is, about four hundred dollars a year: the last twenty-five years, during which he was settled at Berlin, near Hartford, his stipend was about five hundred dollars a year. He was wholly without patrimony, and owing to peculiar circumstances, which will be hereafter explained, my mother had not even the ordinary outfit, as they began their married life. Yet they so brought up their family of eight children, that they all attained respectable positions in life, and at my father's death, he left an estate of four thousand dollars.* These facts throw light upon the simple annals of a country clergyman in Connecticut, half a century ago; they also bear testimony to the thrifty energy and wise frugality of my parents, and especially of my mother, who was the guardian deity of the household.

Ridgefield† belongs to the county of Fairfield, and is now a handsome town, as well on account of its artificial as its natural advantages—with some 2000 inhabitants. It is fourteen miles from Long Island Sound—of which its many swelling hills afford charm-

* One thousand of this was received, a short time before the death of my parents, for the revolutionary services of my maternal grandfather.

† For an account of the present condition of Ridgefield, see letter to C. A. Goodrich, page 300.

ing views. The main street is a mile in length, and is now embellished with several handsome houses. About the middle of it there is, or was, some forty years ago, a white wooden meeting-house, which belonged to my father's congregation. It stood in a small grassy square, the favorite pasture of numerous flocks of geese, and the frequent playground of schoolboys, especially of Saturday afternoons. Close by the front door ran the public road, and the pulpit, facing it, looked out upon it, in fair summer Sundays, as I well remember by a somewhat amusing incident.

In the contiguous town of Lower Salem, dwelt an aged minister by the name of Mead. He was all his life marked with eccentricity, and about these days of which I speak, his mind was rendered yet more erratic by a touch of paralysis. He was, however, still able to preach, and on a certain Sunday, having exchanged with my father, he was in the pulpit and engaged in making his opening prayer. He had already begun his invocation, when David P...., who was the Jehu of that generation, dashed by the front door, upon a horse—a clever animal of which he was but too proud—in a full, round trot. The echo of the clattering hoofs filled the church, —which being of shingles and clapboards was sonorous as a drum—and arrested the attention as well of the minister as the congregation, even before the rider had reached it. The minister was fond of horses —almost to frailty—and from the first, his practiced

ear perceived that the sounds came from a beast of bottom. When the animal shot by the door, he could not restrain his admiration, which was accordingly thrust into the very marrow of his prayer: "We pray thee, O Lord, in a particular and peculiar manner—that's a real smart critter—to forgive us our manifold trespasses, in a particular and peculiar manner," &c.

I have somewhere heard of a traveler on horseback, who, just at eventide, being uncertain of his road, inquired of a person he chanced to meet, the way to Barkhamstead.

"You are in Barkhamstead now," was the reply.

"Yes, but where is the center of the place?"

"It hasn't got any center."

"Well—but direct me to the tavern."

"There ain't any tavern."

"Yes, but the meeting-house?"

"Why didn't you ask that afore? There it is, over the hill!"

So, in those days, in Connecticut—as doubtless in other parts of New England—the meeting-house was the great geographical monument, the acknowledged meridian of every town and village. Even a place without a center or a tavern, had its house of worship, and this was its initial point of reckoning. It was, indeed, something more. It was the town-hall, where all public meetings were held, for civil purposes; it was the temple of religion, the ark of the covenant, the pillar of society—religious, social, and moral—

to the people around. It will not be considered strange then, if I look back to the meeting-house of Ridgefield, as not only a most revered edifice—covered with clapboards and shingles, though it was—but as in some sense the starting point of my existence. Here, at least, linger many of my most cherished remembrances.

A few rods to the south of this, there was, and still is, a tavern, kept in my day, by Squire Keeler. This institution ranked second only to the meeting-house; for the tavern of those days was generally the center of news, and the gathering place for balls, musical entertainments, public shows, &c.; and this particular tavern had special claims to notice. It was, in the first place, on the great thoroughfare of that day, between Boston and New York, and had become a general and favorite stopping-place for travelers. It was, moreover, kept by a hearty old gentleman, who united in his single person the varied functions of publican, postmaster, representative, justice of the peace, and I know not what else. He besides had a thrifty wife, whose praise was in all the land. She loved her customers, especially members of Congress, governors, and others in authority, who wore powder and white-top boots, and who migrated to and fro, in the lofty leisure of their own coaches. She was indeed a woman of mark, and her life has its moral. She scoured and scrubbed and kept things going, until she was seventy years old, at which time, du-

ring an epidemic, she was threatened with an attack. She, however, declared that she had not time to be sick, and kept on working, so that the disease passed her by, though it made sad havoc all around her—especially with more dainty dames, who had leisure to follow the fashion.

Besides all this, there was an historical interest attached to Keeler's tavern, for deeply imbedded in the northeastern corner-post, there was a cannon-ball, planted there during the famous fight with the British in 1777. It was one of the chief historical monuments of the town, and was visited by all curious travelers who came that way.* Little can the present generation imagine with what glowing interest, what ecstatic wonder, what big round eyes, the rising generation of Ridgefield, half a century ago, listened to the account of the fight as given by Lieutenant Smith, himself a witness of the event and a participator of the conflict, sword in hand.

This personage, whom I shall have occasion again to introduce to my readers, was, in my time, a justice

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* Keeler's tavern appears to have received several cannon-shots from the British as they marched through the street, these being directed against a group of Americans who had gathered there. A cannon-ball came crashing through the building, and crossed a staircase just as a man was ascending the steps. The noise and the splinters overcame him with fright, and he tumbled to the bottom, exclaiming—"I'm killed, I'm a dead man!" After a time, however, he discovered that he was unhurt, and thereupon he scampered away, and did not stop till he was safe in the adjoining town of Wilton.

of the peace, town librarian, and general oracle in such loose matters as geography, history, and law—then about as uncertain and unsettled in Ridgefield, as is now the fate of Sir John Franklin, or the longitude of Lilliput. He had a long, lean face; long, lank, silvery hair, and an unctuous, whining voice. With these advantages, he spoke with the authority of a seer, and especially in all things relating to the revolutionary war.

The agitating scenes of that event, so really great in itself, so unspeakably important to the country, had transpired some five and twenty years before. The existing generation of middle age, had all witnessed it; nearly all had shared in its vicissitudes. On every hand there were corporals, sergeants, lieutenants, captains, and colonels—no strutting fops in militia buckram, raw blue and buff, all fuss and feathers—but soldiers, men who had seen service and won laurels in the tented field. Every old man, every old woman had stories to tell, radiant with the vivid realities of personal observation or experience. Some had seen Washington, and some Old Put; one was at the capture of Ticonderoga under Ethan Allen; another was at Bennington, and actually heard old Stark say, "Victory this day, or my wife Molly is a widow!" Some were at the taking of Stony Point, and others in the sanguinary struggle of Monmouth. One had witnessed the execution of André, and another had been present at the capture of Burgoyne.

The time which had elapsed since these events, had served only to magnify and glorify these scenes, as well as the actors, especially in the imagination of the rising generation. If perchance we could now dig up, and galvanize into life, a contemporary of Julius Cæsar, who was present and saw him cross the Rubicon, and could tell us how he looked and what he said—we should listen with somewhat of the greedy wonder with which the boys of Ridgefield listened to Lieutenant Smith, when of a Saturday afternoon, seated on the stoop of Keeler's tavern, he discoursed upon the discovery of America by Columbus, Braddock's defeat, and the old French war—the latter a real epic, embellished with romantic episodes of Indian massacres and captivities. When he came to the Revolution, and spoke of the fight at Ridgefield, and punctuated his discourse with a present cannon-ball, sunk six inches deep in a corner-post of the very house in which we sat, you may well believe it was something more than words—it was, indeed, "action, action, glorious action!" How little can people nowadays—with curiosity trampled down by the march of mind and the schoolmaster abroad—comprehend or appreciate these things!

LETTER III.

The first Remembered Event—High Ridge—The Spy-glass—Sea and Mountain—The Peel—The Black Patch in the road.

My Dear C******

You will perhaps forgive me for a little circumlocution, in the outset of my story. My desire is to carry you with me in my narrative, and make you see in imagination, what I have seen. This naturally requires a little effort—like that of the bird in rising from the ground, which turns his wing first to the right and then to the left, vigorously beating the atmosphere, in order to overcome the gravity which weighs the body down to earth, ere yet it feels the quickening impulse of a conscious launch upon the air.

My memory goes distinctly back to the year 1797, when I was four years old. At that time a great event happened—great in the near and narrow horizon of childhood: we removed from the Old House to the New House! This latter, situated on a road tending westward and branching from the main street, my father had just built; and it then appeared to me quite a stately mansion and very beautiful, inasmuch as it was painted red behind and white in front—most of the dwellings thereabouts being of

the dun complexion which pine-boards and chestnut-shingles assume, from exposure to the weather. Long after—having been absent twenty years—I revisited this my early home, and found it shrunk into a very small and ordinary two-story dwelling, wholly divested of its paint, and scarcely thirty feet square.

This building, apart from all other dwellings, was situated on what is called High Ridge—a long hill, looking down upon the village, and commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country. From our upper windows, this was at once beautiful and diversified. On the south, as I have said, the hills sloped in a sea of undulations down to Long Island Sound, a distance of some fourteen miles. This beautiful sheet of water, like a strip of pale sky, with the island itself, more deeply tinted, beyond, was visible in fair weather, for a stretch of sixty miles, to the naked eye. The vessels—even the smaller ones, sloops, schooners, and fishing craft—could be seen, creeping like insects over the surface. With a spy-glass—and my father had one bequeathed to him by Nathan Kellogg, a sailor, who made rather a rough voyage of life, but anchored at last in the bosom of the church, as this bequest intimates—we could see the masts, sails, and rigging. It was a poor, dim affair, compared with modern instruments of the kind; but to me, its revelations of an element which then seemed as beautiful, as remote, and as mystical as the heavens, surpassed the wonders of

the firmament as since disclosed to my mind by Lord Rosse's telescope.

To the west, at the distance of three miles, lay the undulating ridge of hills, cliffs, and precipices already mentioned, and which bear the name of West Mountain. They are some five hundred feet in height, and from our point of view had an imposing appearance. Beyond them, in the far distance, glimmered the ghost-like peaks of the Highlands along the Hudson. These two prominent features of the spreading landscape—the sea and the mountain, ever present, yet ever remote—impressed themselves on my young imagination with all the enchantment which distance lends to the view. I have never lost my first love. Never, even now, do I catch a glimpse of either of these two rivals of nature, such as I first learned them by heart, but I feel a gush of emotion as if I had suddenly met with the cherished companions of my childhood. In after days, even the purple velvet of the Apennines and the poetic azure of the Mediterranean, have derived additional beauty to my imagination from mingling with these vivid associations of my childhood.

It was to the New House, then, thus situated, that we removed, as I have stated, when I was four years old. On that great occasion, every thing available for draft or burden was put in requisition; and I was permitted, or required, I forget which, to carry the *peel*, as it was then called, but which would now bear

the title of shovel. Birmingham had not then been heard of in those parts, or at least was a great way off; so this particular utensil had been forged expressly for my father by David Olmstead, the blacksmith, as was the custom in those days. I recollect it well, and can state that it was a sturdy piece of iron, the handle being four feet long, with a hemispherical knob at the end. As I carried it along, I doubtless felt a touch of that consciousness of power, which must have filled the breast of Samson as he bore off the gates of Gaza. I recollect perfectly well to have perspired under the operation, for the distance of our migration was half a mile, and the season was summer.

One thing more I remember: I was barefoot; and as we went up the lane which diverged from the main road to the house, we passed over a patch of earth, blackened by cinders, where my feet were hurt by pieces of melted glass and metal. I inquired what this meant, and was told that here a house was burned down* by the British troops already men-

* Lossing says, in his Field Book, p. 409, vol. i.: "Having repulsed the Americans, Tryon's army encamped upon *high ground*, about a mile south of the Congregational church in Ridgefield, until daylight the next morning, when they resumed their march toward Norwalk and Compo, through Wilton. Four dwellings were burned in Ridgefield, and other private property was destroyed, when the marauders struck their tents."

The "high ground" here spoken of was High Ridge, the precise spot where the house I have described, stood. Doubtless the vestiges here mentioned were those of one of the four houses alluded to.

tioned—and then in full retreat—as a signal to the ships that awaited them on the Sound where they had landed, and where they intended to embark.

This detail may seem trifling, but it is not without significance. It was the custom in those days for boys to go barefoot in the mild season. I recollect few things in life more delightful than, in the spring, to cast away my shoes and stockings, and have a glorious scamper over the fields. Many a time, contrary to the express injunctions of my mother, have I stolen this bliss, and many a time have I been punished by a severe cold for my imprudence, if not my disobedience. Yet the bliss then seemed a compensation for the retribution. In these exercises I felt as if stepping on air—as if leaping aloft on wings. I was so impressed with the exultant emotions thus experienced, that I repeated them a thousand times in happy dreams, especially in my younger days. Even now, these visions sometimes come to me in sleep, though with a lurking consciousness that they are but a mockery of the past—sad monitors of the change which time has wrought upon me.

As to the black patch in the lane, that too had its meaning. The story of a house burned down by a foreign army, seized upon my imagination. Every time I passed the place, I ruminated upon it, and put a hundred questions as to how and when it happened. I was soon master of the whole story, and of other similar events which had occurred all over the

country. I was thus initiated into the spirit of that day, and which has never wholly subsided in our country, inasmuch as the war of the Revolution was alike unjust in its origin, and cruel as to the manner in which it was waged. It was, moreover, fought on our own soil, thus making the whole people share, personally, in its miseries. There was scarcely a family in Connecticut whom it did not visit, either immediately or remotely, with the shadows of mourning and desolation. The British nation, to whom this conflict was a foreign war, are slow to comprehend the depth and universality of the popular dislike of England, here in America. Could they know the familiar annals of our towns and villages—burned, plundered, sacked—with all the attendant horrors, for the avowed purpose of punishing a nation of rebels, and those rebels of their own kith and kin; could they be made acquainted with the deeds of those twenty thousand Hessians, sent hither by King George, and who have left their name in our language as a word signifying brigands, who sell their blood and commit murder, massacre, and rape for hire: could they thus read the history of minds and hearts, influenced at the fountains of life for several generations—they would perhaps comprehend, if they could not approve, the habitual distrust of British influence, which lingers among our people. At least, thus instructed, and bearing in mind what has since happened—another war with England, in

which our own territory was the scene of conflict, together with the incessant hostility of the British press toward our manners, our institutions, our policy, our national character, manifested in every form, and from the beginning to the end—the people of England might in some degree comprehend what always strikes them with amazement, that love of England is not largely infused into our national character and habits of thought.

LETTER IV.

Education in New England—The Burial Ground of the Suicide—West Lane—Old Chichester—The School-House—The First Day at School—Aunt Delight—Lewis Olmstead—A Return after Twenty Years—Peter Parley and Mother Goose.

My dear C******

The devotion of the New-England people to education has been celebrated from time immemorial. In this trait of character, Connecticut was not behind the foremost of her sister puritans. Now, among the traditions of the days to which my narrative refers, there was one which set forth that the law of the land assigned to persons committing suicide, a burial-place where four roads met. I do not recollect that this popular notion was ever tested in Ridgefield, for

nobody in those innocent days, so far as I know, became weary of existence. Be this as it may, it is certain that the village school-house was often planted in the very spot supposed to be the privileged graveyard of suicides. The reason is plain enough: the roads were always of ample width at the crossings, and the narrowest of these spaces was sufficient for the little brown seminaries of learning. At the same time—and this was doubtless the material point—the land belonged to the town, and so the site would cost nothing. Such were the ideas of village education in enlightened New England half a century ago. Let those who deny the progress of society, compare this with the state of things at the present day.

About three-fourths of a mile from my father's house, on the winding road to Lower Salem which I have already mentioned, and which bore the name of West Lane, was the school-house where I took my first lessons, and received the foundations of my very slender education. I have since been sometimes asked where I graduated: my reply has always been, "at West Lane." Generally speaking, this has ended the inquiry, whether because my interlocutors have confounded this venerable institution with "Lane Seminary," or have not thought it worth while to risk an exposure of their ignorance as to the college in which I was educated, I am unable to say.

The site of the school-house was a triangular piece

of land, measuring perhaps a rood in extent, and lying, according to the custom of those days, at the meeting of four roads. The ground hereabouts—as everywhere else in Ridgefield—was exceedingly stony, and in making the pathway the stones had been thrown out right and left, and there remained in heaps on either side, from generation to generation. All around was bleak and desolate. Loose, squat stone walls, with innumerable breaches, inclosed the adjacent fields. A few tufts of elder, with here and there a patch of briers and pokeweed, flourished in the gravelly soil. Not a tree, however, remained, save an aged chestnut, at the western angle of the space. This, certainly, had not been spared for shade or ornament, but probably because it would have cost too much labor to cut it down, for it was of ample girth. At all events it was the oasis in our desert during summer; and in autumn, as the burrs disclosed its fruit, it resembled a besieged city. The boys, like so many catapults, hurled at it stones and sticks, until every nut had capitulated.

Two houses only were at hand: one, surrounded by an ample barn, a teeming orchard, and an enormous wood-pile, belonged to Granther Baldwin; the other was the property of "Old Chich-es-ter," an uncouth, unsocial being, whom everybody for some reason or other seemed to despise and shun. His house was of stone and of one story. He had a cow, which every year had a calf. He had a wife—filthy, un-

combed, and vaguely reported to have been brought from the old country. This is about the whole history of the man, so far as it is written in the authentic traditions of the parish. His premises, an acre in extent, consisted of a tongue of land between two of the converging roads. No boy, that I ever heard of, ventured to cast a stone, or to make an incursion into this territory, though it lay close to the school-house. I have often, in passing, peeped timidly over the walls, and caught glimpses of a stout man with a drab coat, drab breeches, and drab gaiters, glazed with ancient grease and long abrasion, prowling about the house; but never did I discover him outside of his own dominion. I know it was darkly intimated that he had been a tory, and was tarred and feathered in the revolutionary war, but as to the rest he was a perfect myth. Granther Baldwin was a character no less marked, but I must reserve his picture for a subsequent letter.

The school-house itself consisted of rough, unpainted clapboards, upon a wooden frame. It was plastered within, and contained two apartments—a little entry, taken out of a corner for a wardrobe, and the school-room proper. The chimney was of stone, and pointed with mortar, which, by the way, had been dug into a honeycomb by uneasy and enterprising penknives. The fireplace was six feet wide and four feet deep. The flue was so ample and so perpendicular, that the rain, sleet, and snow fell direct to the hearth.

In winter, the battle for life with green fizzling fuel, which was brought in sled lengths and cut up by the scholars, was a stern one. Not unfrequently, the wood, gushing with sap as it was, chanced to be out, and as there was no living without fire, the thermometer being ten or twenty degrees below zero, the school was dismissed, whereat all the scholars rejoiced aloud, not having the fear of the schoolmaster before their eyes.

It was the custom at this place, to have a woman's school in the summer months, and this was attended only by young children. It was, in fact, what we now call a primary or infant school. In winter, a man was employed as teacher, and then the girls and boys of the neighborhood, up to the age of eighteen, or even twenty, were among the pupils. It was not uncommon, at this season, to have forty scholars crowded into this little building.

I was about six years old when I first went to school. My teacher was Aunt Delight, that is, Delight Benedict, a maiden lady of fifty, short and bent, of sallow complexion and solemn aspect. I remember the first day with perfect distinctness. I went alone—for I was familiar with the road, it being that which passed by our old house. I carried a little basket, with bread and butter within, for my dinner, the same being covered over with a white cloth. When I had proceeded about half way, I lifted the cover, and debated whether I would not eat my din-

ner, then. I believe it was a sense of duty only that prevented my doing so, for in those happy days, I always had a keen appetite. Bread and butter were then infinitely superior to *pâté de foie gras* now; but still, thanks to my training, I had also a conscience. As my mother had given me the food for dinner, I did not think it right to convert it into lunch, even though I was strongly tempted.

I think we had seventeen scholars—boys and girls —mostly of my own age. Among them were some of my after companions. I have since met several of them—one at Savannah, and two at Mobile, respectably established, and with families around them. Some remain, and are now among the gray old men of the town; the names of others I have seen inscribed on the tombstones of their native village. And the rest—where are they?

The school being organized, we were all seated upon benches, made of what were called *slabs*—that is, boards having the exterior or rounded part of the log on one side: as they were useless for other purposes, these were converted into school-benches, the rounded part down. They had each four supports, consisting of straddling wooden legs, set into augur-holes. Our own legs swayed in the air, for they were too short to touch the floor. Oh, what an awe fell over me, when we were all seated and silence reigned around!

The children were called up, one by one, to Aunt

Delight, who sat on a low chair, and required each, as a preliminary, to make his manners, consisting of a small sudden nod or jerk of the head. She then placed the spelling-book—which was Dilworth's—before the pupil, and with a buck-handled penknife pointed, one by one, to the letters of the alphabet, saying, "What's that?" If the child knew his letters, the "what's that?" very soon ran on thus:

"What's that?"

"A."

"'Stha-a-t?"

"B."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"C."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"D."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"E." &c.

I looked upon these operations with intense curiosity and no small respect, until my own turn came. I went up to the school-mistress with some emotion, and when she said, rather spitefully, as I thought, "Make your obeisance!" my little intellects all fled away, and I did nothing. Having waited a second, gazing at me with indignation, she laid her hand on the top of my head, and gave it a jerk which made my teeth clash. I believe I bit my tongue a little; at all events, my sense of dignity was offended, and when she pointed to A, and asked what it was, it

AUNT DELIGHT. Vol, 1, p. 36.

swam before me dim and hazy, and as big as a full moon. She repeated the question, but I was doggedly silent. Again, a third time, she said, "What's that?" I replied: "Why don't you tell me what it is? I didn't come here to learn you your letters!" I have not the slightest remembrance of this, for my brains were all a-woolgathering; but as Aunt Delight affirmed it to be a fact, and it passed into a tradition, I put it in. I may have told this story some years ago in one of my books, imputing it to a fictitious hero, yet this is its true origin, according to my recollection.

What immediately followed I do not clearly remember, but one result is distinctly traced in my memory. In the evening of this eventful day, the school-mistress paid my parents a visit, and recounted to their astonished ears this, my awful contempt of authority. My father, after hearing the story, got up and went away; but my mother, who was a careful disciplinarian, told me not to do so again! I always had a suspicion that both of them smiled on one side of their faces, even while they seemed to sympathize with the old petticoat and pen-knife pedagogue, on the other; still I do not affirm it, for I am bound to say, of both my parents, that I never knew them, even in trifles, say one thing while they meant another.

I believe I achieved the alphabet that summer, but my after progress, for a long time, I do not remember. Two years later I went to the winter-school at the

same place, kept by Lewis Olmstead—a man who had a call for plowing, mowing, carting manure, &c., in summer, and for teaching school in the winter, with a talent for music at all seasons, wherefore he became chorister upon occasion, when, peradventure, Deacon Hawley could not officiate. He was a celebrity in ciphering, and 'Squire Seymour declared that he was the greatest "arithmeticker" in Fairfield county. All I remember of his person is his hand, which seemed to me as big as Goliah's, judging by the claps of thunder it made in my ears on one or two occasions.

The next step of my progress which is marked in my memory, is the spelling of words of two syllables. I did not go very regularly to school, but by the time I was ten years old I had learned to write, and had made a little progress in arithmetic. There was not a grammar, a geography, or a history of any kind in the school. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were the only things taught, and these very indifferently—not wholly from the stupidity of the teacher, but because he had forty scholars, and the standards of the age required no more than he performed. I did as well as the other scholars, certainly no better. I had excellent health and joyous spirits; in leaping, running, and wrestling I had but one superior of my age, and that was Stephen Olmstead, a snug-built fellow, smaller than myself, and who, despite our rivalry, was my chosen friend and companion. I seemed to live

for play: alas! how the world has changed since I have discovered that we live to agonize over study, work, care, ambition, disappointment, and then ——?

As I shall not have occasion again, formally, to introduce this seminary into my narrative, I may as well close my account of it now. After I had left my native town for some twenty years, I returned and paid it a visit. Among the monuments that stood high in my memory was the West Lane schoolhouse. Unconsciously carrying with me the measures of childhood, I had supposed it to be at least thirty feet square; how had it dwindled when I came to estimate it by the new standards I had formed! It was in all things the same, yet wholly changed to me. What I had deemed a respectable edifice, as it now stood before me was only a weather-beaten little shed, which, upon being measured, I found to be less than twenty feet square. It happened to be a warm, summer day, and I ventured to enter the place. I found a girl, some eighteen years old, keeping a ma'am school for about twenty scholars, some of whom were studying Parley's Geography. The mistress was the daughter of one of my schoolmates, and some of the boys and girls were grandchildren of the little brood which gathered under the wing of Aunt Delight, when I was an a-b-c-darian. None of them, not even the school-mistress, had ever heard of me. The name of my father, as having ministered unto the people of Ridgefield in some bygone

age, was faintly traced in their recollection. As to Peter Parley, whose geography they were learning—they supposed him some decrepit old gentleman hobbling about on a crutch, a long way off, for whom, nevertheless, they had a certain affection, inasmuch as he had made geography into a story-book. The frontispiece-picture of the old fellow, with his gouty foot in a chair, threatening the boys that if they touched his tender toe, he would tell them no more stories—secured their respect, and placed him among the saints in the calendar of their young hearts. Well, thought I, if this goes on I may yet rival Mother Goose!

LETTER V.

The Joyous Nature of Childhood—Drawbacks—The Small-pox—The Pest House—Our House a Hospital—Inoculation—The Force of Early Impressions—Rogers' Pleasures of Memory—My First Whistle—My Sister's Recollections of a Sunday Afternoon—The Song of Kalewala—Poetic Character of Early Life—Obligations to make Childhood Happy—Beautiful Instinct of Mothers—Improvements in the Training of Children Suggested—Example of our Saviour—The Family a Divine Institution—Christian Marriage.

My dear C******

I hope you will not imagine that I am thinking too little of your amusement and too much of my own, if I stop a few moments to note the lively recollections I entertain of the joyousness of my early life, and not of mine only, but that of my playmates and companions. In looking back to those early days, the whole circle of the seasons seems to me almost like one unbroken morning of pleasure.

I was of course subjected to the usual crosses incident to my age—those painful and mysterious visitations sent upon children—the measles, mumps, whooping-cough, and the like—usually regarded as retributions for the false step of our mother Eve in the Garden; but they have almost passed from my memory, as if overflowed and borne away by the general drift of happiness which filled my bosom. Among these calamities, one monument alone remains—the small-pox. It was in the year 1798, as I

well remember, that my father's house was converted into a hospital, or, as it was then called, a "pest-house," where, with some dozen other children, I was inoculated for this disease, then the scourge and terror of the world.

It will be remembered that Jenner published his first memoir upon vaccination about this period, but his discoveries were generally repudiated as mere charlatanism, for some time after. There were regular small-pox hospitals in different parts of New England, usually in isolated situations, so as not to risk dissemination of the dreaded infection. One of these, and quite the most celebrated of its time, had been established by my maternal grandfather upon Duck Island, lying off the present town of West Brook—then called Pochaug—in Long Island Sound; but it had been destroyed by the British during the Revolution, and was never revived. There was one upon the northern shore of Long Island, and doubtless many others; but as it was often inconvenient to send children to these places, several families would unite and convert one house, favorably situated, into a temporary hospital, for the inoculation of such as needed it. It was in pursuance of this custom that our habitation was selected, on the present occasion, as the scene of this somewhat awful process.

There were many circumstances which contributed to impress this event upon my mind. In the first place, there was a sort of popular horror of the "pest-

house," not merely because of the virulent nature of small-pox, but because of a common superstitious feeling in the community—though chiefly confined to the ignorant classes—that voluntarily to create the disease, was contrary to nature, and a plain tempting of Providence. In their view, if death ensued, it was esteemed little better than murder. Thus, as our house was being put in order for the coming scene, and as the subjects of the fearful experiment were gathering in, a gloom pervaded all countenances, and its shadow naturally fell upon me.

The lane in which our house was situated was fenced up, north and south, so as to cut off all intercourse with the world around. A flag was raised, and upon it were inscribed the ominous words ☞ "SMALL-POX." My uncle and aunt, from New Haven, arrived with their three children.* Half a dozen others of the neighborhood were gathered together, making, with our own children, somewhat over a dozen subjects for the experiment. When all was ready, like Noah and his family we were shut in. Provisions were deposited in a basket at a point agreed upon, down the lane. Thus, we were cut off from the world, excepting only that Dr. Perry, the physician, ventured to visit us in our fell dominion.

As to myself, the disease passed lightly over, leav-

* Elizur Goodrich, now of Hartford; Professor Chauncey A. Goodrich, now of Yale College; and the late Mrs. Nancy Ellsworth, wife of H. L. Ellsworth, former Commissioner of Patents, at Washington.

ing, however, its indisputable autographs upon various parts of my body.* Were it not for these testimonials, I should almost suspect that I had escaped the disease, for I only remember, among my symptoms and my sufferings, a little headache, and the privation of salt and butter upon my hasty-pudding. My restoration to these privileges I distinctly recollect: doubtless these gave me more pleasure than the clean bill of health which they implied. Several of the patients suffered severely, and among them my brother and one of my cousins. The latter, in a recent conversation upon the subject, claimed the honor of two thousand pustules, and was not a little humbled when, by documentary evidence, they were reduced to two hundred.

Yet, while it is evident that I was subjected to the usual drawbacks upon the happiness of childhood, these were, in fact, so few as to have passed away from my mind, leaving in my memory only the general tide of life, seeming, as I look back, to have been one bright current of enjoyment, flowing

* It may not be useless to state, in passing, that in 1850, one of my family, who had been vaccinated thirty years before, was attacked by varioloid. It being deemed advisable that all of us should be vaccinated, I was subjected to the process, and this took such effect upon me that I had a decided fever, with partial delirium, for two days; thus showing my accessibility to the infection of small-pox. Here then was evidence that both vaccination and inoculation are not perpetual guarantees against this disease—a fact, indeed, now fully admitted by the medical faculty. The doctrine is, that the power of these preventives becomes, at last, worn out, and therefore prudence dictates a repetition of vaccination after about ten years.

amid flowers, and all in the company of companions as happy and jubilant as myself. By a beautiful alchemy of the heart, the clouds of early life appear afterward to be only accessories to the universal springtide of pleasure. Even this dark episode of the pesthouse, stands in my memory as rather an interesting event, partly because there was something strange and romantic about it, and partly because it is the office of the imagination to gild with sunshine even the clouds of the past.

In all this, my experience was in no way peculiar: I was but a representation of childhood in all countries and ages. I do not forget the instances in which children are subjected to misfortune, nor the moral obliquity which is in every childish heart. But making due allowance for the shadows thus cast upon the spring of life, its general current is such as I have described.

It has been oracularly said that the child is father of the man. If it is meant that men fulfill the promises of childhood, it is not true; for so far as my observation goes, not one child in five, when grown up, is altogether what was expected of him. If it is meant that the influences operating upon children ordinarily determine their future fate, it is doubtless correct; though I may remark, by the way, that it is rather an obscure mode of saying what had been happily expresed by Solomon, thousands of years ago.

But why is it that early impressions are thus wing-

ed with fate? Partly because of the plastic character of young life, and partly also because of the vividness, sincerity, and intensity of its conceptions. And these, be it remembered, are always pleasurable, unless some extraneous incident or accident intervenes to thwart the tendency of nature. The heart of childhood as readily inclines to flow in a current of enjoyment, as water to run down hill. Hence it is, that in a majority of cases, or at least in a large proportion of cases, the remembrances of childhood are like those I have described—not only vivid and glowing, but cheerful and joyous.

As to this fullness and intensity of youthful impressions, every mind can furnish examples: all true poets recognize it; most celebrate it. Who can not remember particular places—such as hillsides, valleys, lawns; particular things—as rocks, trees, brooks; particular times and seasons — which have become fixed in the mind, and consecrated in the heart for all future time, by association with the ardent and glowing thoughts or experiences of childhood? Often a single incident, one momentary impression, is indelibly stamped as upon a die of steel. Let me take an example in my own childish remembrance. There was a willow-tree near my father's house, which was graven on my memory by a particular circumstance: from this my brother cut a branch and made me a whistle of it—the first I remember to have possessed. The form of this tree, and all

the surrounding objects, as well as the day of the week and the season of the year, have lived from that hour in my memory. In a similar way, I remember a multitude of other familiar objects, all suggesting similar associations and recollections. Rogers, in his beautiful poem, the "Pleasures of Memory," recognizes this vividness of early impressions, in supposing a person, after an absence of many years, to visit the site of the school-house of his early days—now in decay and ruin. As he passes over the place,

> "Up springs, at every step, to claim a tear,
> Some little friendship form'd in childhood here;
> And not the lightest leaf but trembling teems
> With golden visions and romantic dreams."

I was recently conversing with my sister M..... upon this subject, and entertaining the views I have here expressed, she recited to me, as illustrative of her experience, some lines she had composed several years ago, but which she had not thought worth committing to paper. I requested a copy, which she furnished me, and I here insert them. They are designed to express the thoughts suggested by the recollection of a particular family scene, of a Sunday afternoon, which, for some reason or other, had been indelibly impressed upon her young mind.

A REMEMBERED SABBATH EVENING OF MY CHILDHOOD.

Oh! let me weave one song to-night,
For the spell is on me now;
And thoughts come thronging thick and bright,
All fresh and rosy with the light
Of childhood's early glow.

They hurry from out the forgotten past,
Through the gather'd mist of years—
From the halls of Memory, dim and vast,
Where they have buried lain in the shadows cast
By recent joy or fears.

Say not mine is a thoughtful brow,
Furrow'd by care and pain;
My childhood's curls seem over it now,
As they lay there years and years ago—
And I am a child again.

And I am again in my childhood's home,
Which looks on the distant sea;
And the loved and lost—they come—they come!
To the old but well-remember'd room,
And I sit by my father's knee.

'Tis the Sabbath evening hour of prayer;
And in the accustom'd place
Is my Father, with calm, benignant air:
Each brother and sister too is there,
And my Mother, with stately grace.

And with the rest comes a dark-eyed child—
The youngest of all is she,
Bringing her friend and playmate wild
In her dimpled arms, and with warnings mild
Checking its sportive glee.

And well could my young heart sympathize
With all I saw her do:
With the thought which danced in those laughing eyes,
Veil'd by a look demure and wise,—
That her kitten should join the service too.

And though glad I came at my father's call,
My thoughts had much to do
With the whispering leaves of the poplar tall,
And the checker'd light on the whitewash'd wall,
And the pigeons' loving coo.

And I watch'd the banish'd kitten's bound,
As it frolick'd to and fro;
And wish'd the spyglass could be found,
That I might see on the distant Sound
The tall ships come and go.

Through the open door my stealthy gaze
Sought the shadows, long and still;
When sudden the sun's departing rays
Set the church windows all a-blaze,
On Greenfield's* distant hill.

But new and wondering thoughts awoke,
Like morning from the night,
As, with deeply reverent voice and look,
My father read from the Holy Book,
By that Sabbath's waning light.

He read of Creation's early birth—
This vast and wondrous frame—
How "*in the beginning*" the Heavens and Earth
From the formless void were order'd forth,
And how they obedient came.

* From our windows we could not only see the church spire of Greenfield Hill, but the spires of several other churches in the far distance.

How Darkness lay like a heavy pall
On the face of the silent deep,
Till, answering to the Almighty call,
Light came, and spread, and waken'd all
From that deep and brooding sleep.

Oh! ever as sinks the Sabbath sun
In the glowing summer skies,
My father's voice, my mother's look,
Blent with the words of the Holy Book,
Upon my memory rise.

For then were traced on the mystic scroll
Of deathless imagery,
Deep hidden within my secret soul,
Which eternity only will fully unroll—
Some lines of my destiny!

The impressibility of youth, and the depth and earnestness of its conceptions, are beautifully suggested in the opening passage of the famous Finnish poem, the epic song of Kalewala. The lines are as follows:

"These the words we have received—
These, the songs we do inherit,
Are of Wäinämöinen's girdle—
From the forge of Ilmarinen,
Of the sword of Kankomieli,
Of the bow of Youkanhainen,
Of the borders of the North-fields,
Of the plains of Kalewala.

"These my father sang aforetime,
As he chipped the hatchet's handle;
These were taught me by my mother,

As she twirled her flying spindles,
When I on the floor was sporting;
Round her knee was gayly dancing,
As a pitiable weakling—
As a weakling small of stature.
Never failed these wondrous stories,
Told of Sampo, told of Louhi:
Old grew Sampo in the stories;
Louhi vanished with her magic;
In the songs Wiunen perished:
In the play died Lemminkainen.

"There are many other stories,
Magic sayings which I learned,
Which I gathered by the wayside,
Culled amid the heather-blossoms,
Rifled from the bushy copses.
From the bending twigs I pluck'd them,
Plucked them from the tender grasses,
When a shepherd-boy I sauntered,
As a lad upon the pastures,
On the honey-bearing meadows,
On the gold-illumined hillock,
Following black Muurikki
At the side of spotted Kimmo.

"Songs the very coldness gave me,
Music found I in the rain-drops;
Other songs the winds brought to me,
Other songs, the ocean-billows;
Birds, by singing in the branches,
And the tree-top spoke in whispers."

Thus in early life all nature is poetry: childhood and youth are indeed one continuous poem. In most cases this ecstasy of emotion and conception passes

away without our special notice. A large portion of it dies out from the memory, but passages are written upon the heart in lines of light and power, that can not be effaced. These become woven into the texture of the soul, and give character to it for time—perchance for eternity. The whole fountain of the mind, like some mineral spring, reaching to the interior elements of the earth—is imbued with ingredients which make its current sweet or bitter forever.

Pray excuse me for making a few suggestions upon these facts—even if they seem like sermonizing. If early life is thus happy in its general current—in its nature and tendency—surely it is well and wise for those who have the care of children, to see in it the design of the Creator, and to follow the lead He has thus given. If God places our offspring in Eden, let us not causeless or carelessly take them out of it. It is certainly a mistake to consider childhood and youth—the first twenty years of life—as only a period of constraint and discipline. This is one-third part of existence—to a majority, it is more than the half of life. It is the only portion which seems made for unalloyed enjoyment. It is the morning, and all is sunshine: the after part of the day is necessarily devoted to toil and care, and that too amid clouds, and at last, beneath the shadows of approaching night. Let us not, then, presume to mar this birthright of bliss.

You will not suspect me to mean that government,

discipline, instruction, are to be withheld. These are indispensable, but they should all be reconciled with the happy flow of life. This is, in fact, often attained by the instinct of mothers, whom God has given grace to combine government and indulgence, discipline and encouragement in such happy mixture and measure, as to check the weeds, and foster the fruits, of the soul. It is not always done: it is not done perfectly, perhaps, in a single case. Yet I can not doubt that—despite all the difficulties which poverty, and ignorance, and sin impose upon the world—a majority of mothers do in fact temper their conduct to their children, so as, on the whole, to exercise, in a large degree, a saving, redeeming, regenerating influence upon them.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. There are too many persons who look upon children as reprobate—too many who regard the rod as the rule, not the exception. Some imagine that the whole business of education lies in study, and that to cram the mind is to enrich it. Some, indeed, are indifferent, and think even less of the moral growth and improvement of their children, than they do of the growth and improvement of their cattle. I think there are still others, who dislike children—who are annoyed by their presence, impatient of their little caprices, and regardless of their virtues; who only see their foibles, and would always confine them to the nursery. Even the Disciples of Christ seem not to

have been superior to this common feeling. The answer of our Saviour was at once a rebuke and a lesson. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." There is profound theology—there is deep, touching, divine humanity in this. Children are not reprobate: they are docile and teachable, with thoughts and emotions so pure as to breathe of heaven. They are cheerful, happy; their presence was healthful, even to the "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief!"

It is in this last aspect that I particularly wish to present this subject. Children, no doubt, impose burdens upon their parents. No words can express the weight of care which often presses upon the heart of the mother—in the deep watches of the night, in moments of despondency, in periods of feeble health, in the pinches of poverty, in the trying, dark days of the spirit—as to the future prospects of her offspring. Anxieties for their welfare, temporal and eternal, often seem to wring the very heart, drop by drop, of its blood. And yet, all things considered, children are the great blessing of the household. They impose cares, but they elevate all hearts around them. They cultivate unselfish and therefore purifying feelings: they cheer the old, by reviving recollections of early life: they excite the young, by kindly fellowship and emulous sympathy. Without children, the world would be like a forest of old oaks, gnarled,

groaning, and fretful in the desolation of winter. For myself, I can say, that children are the best of playmates when I am well with the world, and they are the best of medicine, when I am sick and weary of it.

It is children, here in the family, that are thus a blessing: not the children of a community, as in Sparta, for there they were educated to crime. In every community, where they are not the charge of the parents, and especially of the mother, they would, I think, infallibly become reprobates. The family seems to me a divine institution. Marriage, sanctioned by religion, is its bond: children its fruition. No statesman, no founder of a religion, no reformer—after innumerable attempts—has given the world a substitute for Christian Marriage and that institution which follows—the Family. It is, up to this era of our world, the anchor of society, the fountain of love and hope and dignity in man and human society. Those who attempt to overturn it, are, I think, working against the Almighty.

LETTER VI.

The Inner Life of Towns—Physical Aspect and Character of Ridgefield—Effects of Cultivation upon Climate—Energetic Character of the First Settlers of Ridgefield—Classes of the People as to Descent—Their Occupations—Newspapers—Position of my Father's Family—Management of the Farm—Domestic Economy—Mechanical Professions—Beef and Pork—The Thanksgiving Turkey—Bread—Fuel—Flint and Steel—Friction Matches—Prof. Silliman—Pyroligneous Acid—Maple Sugar—Rum—Dram-drinking—Tansey Bitters—Brandy—Whisky—The First "Still"—Wine—Dr. G.'s Sacramental Wine—Domestic Products—Bread and Butter—Linen and Woolen Cloth—Cotton—Flax and Wool—The Little Spinning-wheel—Sally St. John and the Rat-trap—Manufacture of Wool—Molly Gregory and Fuging Tunes—The Tanner and Hatter—The Revolving Shoemaker—Whipping the Cat—Carpets—Coverlids and Quiltings—Village Bees and Raisings—The Meeting-house that was destroyed by Lightning—Deaconing a Hymn.

My dear C******

It will be no new suggestion to a reflecting man like yourself, that towns, as well as men, have their inner and their outer life. There is a striking difference in one respect, between the two subjects; the age of man is set at threescore years and ten, while towns seldom die. The pendulum of human life vibrates by seconds, that of towns by centuries. The history of cities, the focal points of society, may be duly chronicled even to their minutest incidents; but cities do not constitute nations; the mass of almost every country is in the smaller towns and villages. The outer life of these is vaguely jotted down

in the census, and reported in the Gazetteers; but their inner life, which comprises the condition and progress of the community at large, is seldom written. We may see glimpses of it in occasional sermons, in special biographies, in genealogical memoranda. We may take periods of fifty years, and deduce certain general inferences from statistical tables of births and deaths; but still, the living men and manners as they rise in a country town, are seldom portrayed. I am therefore tempted to give you a rapid sketch of Ridgefield and of the people—how they lived, thought, and felt, at the beginning of the present century. It will serve as an example of rustic life throughout New England, fifty years ago, and it will moreover enable me, by contrasting this state of things with what I found to exist many years after, to show the steady, though silent, and perhaps unnoted progress of society among us.

From what I have already said, you will easily imagine the prominent physical characteristics and aspect of my native town—a general mass of hills, rising up in a crescent of low mountains, and commanding a wide view on every side. The soil was naturally hard, and thickly sown with stones of every size, from the immovable rock to the pebble. The fields, at this time, were divided by rude stone walls, and the surface of most was dotted with gathered heaps of stones and rocks, thus clearing spaces for cultivation, yet leaving a large portion of

the land still encumbered with its original curse. The climate was severe, on account of the elevation of the site, yet this was perhaps fully compensated by a corresponding salubrity.

I may add, in passing, that the climate of New England generally, has been mitigated within the last fifty years by the changes which civilization has wrought on the surface of the country—the felling of forests, the draining of marshes, the cultivation of the soil, and other similar causes—to an extent not generally appreciated. A person who has not made observations for a long period of time, is hardly aware of these mutations—effected by a growing and industrious agricultural community, even in the sterner features of nature. This may, however, be easily appreciated, if one will compare a district of country covered with its original forests, and converted into one vast sponge by its thick coating of weeds, shrubs, mosses, and decayed wood—the accumulations of centuries—thus making the hills and valleys a universal swamp, hoarding the rains of summer, and treasuring the snows of winter—with the same district, cleared of its trees, its soil turned up by the plow to the sun, and its waste waters carried off by roads and drains. Such a process over a whole country, is evidently sufficient to affect its temperature, and materially to modify its climate. I know many tracts of land, which, fifty years ago, were reeking with moisture, their surface defying cultivation by the

plow, and their roads impassable a great part of the year by means of the accumulation of water in the soil—now covered with houses, gardens, and cornfields, and all the result of the slow but transforming processes bestowed by man upon every country which he subjects to cultivation. Nature is like man himself—rude in his aspect and severe in his temper, until softened and subdued by civilization. Our New England, two centuries ago, was, like its inhabitants, bleak and wild to the view, harsh and merciless in its climate: the change of these is analogous to the change which has been effected by substituting towns and villages for wigwams, and Christian man for the savage.

Yet despite the somewhat forbidding nature of the soil and climate of Ridgefield, it may be regarded as presenting a favorable example of New England country life and society, at the beginning of the present century. The town was originally settled by a sturdy race of men, mostly the immediate descendants of English emigrants, some from Norwalk and some from Milford. Their migration over an intervening space of savage hills, rocks, and ravines, into a territory so forbidding, and their speedy conversion of this into a thriving and smiling village, are witnesses to their courage and energy. The names which they bore, and which have been disseminated over the Union — Benedicts, Olmsteads, Northups, Keelers, Hoyts, Nashes, Dauceys, Meads, Hawleys—are no

less significant of the vigor and manliness of the stock to which they belonged.

At the time referred to, the date of my earliest recollection, the society of Ridgefield was exclusively English, and the manners and customs such as might have been expected, under the modifying influence of existing circumstances. I remember but one Irishman, one negro, and one Indian in the town. The first had begged and blarneyed his way from Long Island, where he had been wrecked; the second was a liberated slave; and the last was the vestige of a tribe, which dwelt of yore in a swampy tract, the name of which I have forgotten. We had a professed beggar, called Jagger, who had served in the armies of more than one of the Georges, and insisted upon crying "God save the king!" even on the 4th of July, and when openly threatened by the boys with a gratuitous ride on a rail. We had one settled pauper, Mrs. Yabacomb, who, for the first dozen years of my life, was my standard type for the witch of Endor.

Nearly all the inhabitants of Ridgefield were farmers, with the few mechanics that were necessary to carry on society in a somewhat primeval state. Even the persons not professionally devoted to agriculture, had each his farm, or at least his garden and home lot, with his pigs, poultry, and cattle. The population might have been 1200, comprising two hundred families. All could read and write, but in point

of fact, beyond the Almanac and Watts' Psalms and Hymns, their literary acquirements had little scope. There were, I think, four newspapers, all weekly, published in the State: one at Hartford, one at New London, one at New Haven, and one at Litchfield. There were, however, not more than three subscribers to all these in our village. We had, however, a public library of some two hundred volumes, and what was of equal consequence—the town was on the road which was then the great thoroughfare, connecting Boston with New York, and hence it had means of intelligence from travelers constantly passing through the place, which kept it up with the march of events.

If Ridgefield was thus rather above the average of Connecticut villages in its range of civilization, I suppose the circumstances and modes of life in my father's family, were somewhat above those of most people around us. We had a farm of forty acres, with four cows, two horses, and some two dozen sheep, to which may be added a stock of poultry, including a flock of geese. My father carried on the farm, besides preaching two sermons a week, and attending to other parochial duties—visiting the sick, attending funerals, solemnizing marriages, &c. He personally laid out the beds and planted the garden; he pruned the fruit-trees, and worked with the men in the meadow in the press of haying-time. He generally cut the corn-stalks himself, and always shelled the ears; the latter being done by drawing

them across the handle of the frying-pan, fastened over a wash-tub. I was sometimes permitted, as an indulgence, to spell my father in this, which was a favorite employment. With these and a few other exceptions, our agricultural operations were carried on by hired help.

It may seem that I should have passed over these somewhat commonplace passages in my father's life, but my judgment teaches me otherwise. There is good example and good argument in behalf of these labors of the garden and the field, even in a professional man. Not to cite Achilles and Abraham, who slaughtered their own mutton, and Cincinnatus, who held his own plow, it was the custom in New England, at the time I speak of, for country lawyers, physicians, clergymen—even Doctors of Divinity, to partake of these homespun labors. In the library of the Atheneum at Hartford, is a collection of Almanacs, formerly belonging to John Cotton Smith—one of the most elegant and accomplished men of his time—a distinguished member of Congress, Judge of the Superior Court, and several years Governor of the State. In looking it over, I observed such notes as the following, made with his own hand: "cut my barley," "began rye harvest," "planted field of potatoes," &c.; thus showing his personal attention to, if not his participation in, the affairs of the farm.*

* See a further notice of Gov. Smith, page 89, vol ii

Nearly all the judges of the Superior Court occasionally worked in the field, in these hearty old federal times.

Whether these facts may be connected with others, which I am about to state, is a question I leave for doctors to determine. Certain it is that at this period professional men had good health and good digestion: no clergyman was known to have bronchitis. I seldom heard of dyspepsia, bodily or mental, during the existence of the Charter of Charles II. There is a pretty common notion in the United States, that Jefferson infused a general demagogism into this country, which percolated through the blood and bone of society, and set everybody in some way or other, to flattering the masses. It is certain that about this time, not only the politician, but the preacher, the lawyer, the editor, the author, all took to talking, speech-making, lecturing in a new way, in a new sense—that is, so as to seduce the multitude. Thus was ushered in the Age of Talk, which soon grew into a rage. The mania kept pace with democracy, and democracy with the mania; and at last, at the end of this national flatulence, the world grew light-headed, and forth came a spawn of isms, which no man can number. Under the influence of this advent of new notions, some took to cold water and some to mint-juleps; some to raw vegetables and some to hot slings. All agonized in one way or another Every thing grew intense: politics swam with pota-

tions; religion got mixed up with transcendentalism; until at last, professors took to table-turning and judges to spirit-rappings. Now I do not say that all this is a sequence of logical deductions: that spiritualism is to be fathered upon Thomas Jefferson: what I affirm is, that demagogism and democracy, dyspepsia and transcendentalism, vegetarianism and spiritualism, have all come up, one after another, since old federalism went down! If it is any object to cure mankind of these vapors, I recommend that we all go back to the habits of other days, in which ministers, judges and governors wrought occasionally in the field.

But I return to Ridgefield. The household, as well as political, economy of these days lay in this, that every family lived as much as possible within itself. Money was scarce, wages being about fifty cents a day, though these were generally paid in meat, vegetables, and other articles of use — seldom in money. There was not a factory of any kind in the place.* There was a butcher, but he only went from house to house to slaughter the cattle and swine of his neighbors. There was a tanner, but he only dressed other people's skins: there was a clothier, but he generally fulled and dressed other people's cloth. All this is typical of the mechanical opera-

* I recollect, as an after-thought, one exception. There was a hatter who supplied the town; but he generally made hats to order, and usually in exchange for the skins of foxes, rabbits, muskrats, and other chance peltry. I frequently purchased my powder and shot from the proceeds of skins which I sold him.

tions of the place. Even dyeing blue a portion of the wool, so as to make linsey-woolsey for short gowns, aprons, and blue-mixed stockings—vital necessities in those days—was a domestic operation. During the autumn, a dye-tub in the chimney corner —thus placed so as to be cherished by the genial heat —was as familiar in all thrifty houses, as the Bible or the back-log. It was covered with a board, and formed a cosy seat in the wide-mouthed fireplace, especially of a chill evening. When the night had waned, and the family had retired, it frequently became the anxious seat of the lover, who was permitted to carry on his courtship, the object of his addresses sitting demurely in the opposite corner. Some of the first families in Connecticut, I suspect, could their full annals be written, would find their foundations to have been laid in these chimney-corner courtships.

Being thus exposed, this institution of the dye-tub was the frequent subject of distressing and exciting accidents. Among the early, indelible incidents in my memory, happening to all vigorous characters, turning this over is one of the most prominent. Nothing so roused the indignation of thrifty housewives, for besides the ignominious avalanche of blue upon the floor, there was an infernal appeal made to another sense than that of sight. Every youth of parts was laden with experience in this way. I have a vague impression that Philip N...., while courting

H.... M..., was suspended for six weeks, for one of these mischances. If it was not he, it was some other spark of that generation.

To this general system of domestic economy our family was not an exception. Every autumn, it was a matter of course that we had a fat ox or a fat cow, ready for slaughter. One full barrel was salted down; the hams were cut out, slightly salted, and hung up in the chimney for a few days, and thus became "dried" or "hung beef," then as essential as the staff of life. Pork was managed in a similar way, though even on a larger scale, for two barrels were indispensable. A few pieces, as the spare-ribs, &c., were distributed to the neighbors, who paid in kind when they killed their swine.

Mutton and poultry came in their turn, all from our own stock, save that on Thanksgiving-day some of the magnates gave the parson a turkey. This, let me observe, in those good old times, was a bird of mark; no timid, crouching biped, with downcast head and pallid countenance, but stalking like a lord, and having wattles red as a "banner bathed in slaughter." His beard, or in modern parlance, his *goat*, without the aid of gum and black-ball, was so long, shining, and wiry, that it might have provoked the envy of his modern human rival in foppery. There was, in fact, something of the genius of the native bird still in him, for though the race was nearly extinct, a few wild flocks lingered in the remote

woods. Occasionally in the depth of winter, and along to the early spring, these stole to the barnyard, and held communion with their civilized compatriots. Severe battles ensued among the leaders for the favors of the fair, and as the wild cocks always conquered, the vigor of the race was kept up.

Our bread was of rye, tinged with Indian meal. Wheat bread was reserved for the sacrament and company; a proof not of its superiority, but of its scarcity and consequent estimation. All the vegetables came from our garden and farm. The fuel was supplied by our own woods—sweet-scented hickory, snapping chestnut, odoriferous oak, and reeking, fizzling ash—the hot juice of the latter, by the way, being a sovereign antidote for the ear-ache. These were laid in huge piles, all alive with sap, on the tall, gaunt andirons. You might have thought you heard John Rogers and his family at the stake, by their plaintive simmerings. The building of a fire was a real architectural achievement, favored by the wide yawning fireplace, and was always begun by daybreak. There was first a back-log, from fifteen to four and twenty inches in diameter and five feet long, imbedded in the ashes; then came a top log; then a fore stick; then a middle stick, and then a heap of kindlings, reaching from the bowels down to the bottom. A-top of all was a pyramid of smaller fragments, artfully adjusted, with spaces for the blaze.

Friction matches had not then been sent from the

regions of brimstone, to enable every boy or beggar to carry a conflagration in his pocket. If there were no coals left from the last night's fire, and none to be borrowed from the neighbors, resort was had to flint, steel, and tinder-box. Often, when the flint was dull, and the steel soft, and the tinder damp, the striking of fire was a task requiring both energy and patience. If the edifice on the andirons was skilfully constructed, the spark being applied, there was soon a furious stinging smoke, which Silliman told the world some years after, consisted mainly of pyroligneous acid. Nevertheless, in utter ignorance of this philosophical fact, the forked flame soon began to lick the sweating sticks above, and by the time the family had arisen, and assembled in the "keeping room," there was a roaring blaze, which defied even the bitter blasts of winter—and which, by the way, found abundant admittance through the crannies of the doors and windows. To feed the family fire in those days, during the severe season, was fully one man's work.

But to go on with our household history. Sugar was partially supplied by our maple-trees. These were tapped in March, the sap being collected, and boiled down in the woods. This was wholly a domestic operation, and one in which all the children rejoiced, each taking his privilege of an occasional sip or dip, from the period of the limpid sap, to the granulated condiment. Nevertheless, the chief supply of sugar was from the West Indies.

MAKING MAPLE SUGAR. Vol. I, p.68.

Rum was largely consumed, but our distilleries had scarcely begun. A half-pint of it was given as a matter of course to every day-laborer, more particularly in the summer season. In all families, rich or poor, it was offered to male visitors as an essential point of hospitality, or even good manners. Women—I beg pardon—ladies, took their schnapps, then named "Hopkins' Elixir," which was the most delicious and seductive means of getting tipsy that has been invented. Crying babies were silenced with hot toddy, then esteemed an infallible remedy for wind on the stomach. Every man imbibed his morning dram, and this was esteemed temperance. There is a story of a preacher about those days, who thus lectured his parish: "I say nothing, my beloved brethren, against taking a little bitters before breakfast, and after breakfast, especially if you are used to it. What I contend against is this dramming, dramming, dramming, at all hours of the day. There are some men who take a glass at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and at four in the afternoon. I do not purpose to contend against old established customs, my brethren, rendered respectable by time and authority; but this dramming, dramming, is a crying sin in the land."

However absurd this may seem now, it was not then very wide of the public sentiment. Huxham's tincture was largely prescribed by the physicians. Tansey bitters were esteemed a sort of panacea,

moral as well as physical, for even the morning prayer went up heavily without it. The place of Stoughton—for this mixture was not then invented —was supplied by a tuft of tansey which Providence seemed to place somewhere in every man's garden or home lot.

As to brandy, I scarcely heard of it, so far as I can recollect, till I was sixteen years old, and as apprentice in a country store, was called upon to sell it. Cider was the universal table beverage. Cider brandy and whisky were soon after evoked from the infernal caldron of evil spirits. I remember, in my boyhood, to have seen a strange, zigzag tin tube, denominated a "still," belonging to one of our neighbors, converting, drop by drop, certain innocent liquids into the infernal fire-water. But, in the days I speak of, French brandy was rather confined to the houses of the rich, and to the drug shop.

Wine in our country towns was then almost exclusively used for the sacrament. I remember to have heard a story of these days, which is suggestive. The Rev. Dr. G..... of J.... had a brother who had lived some years in France, and was familiar with the wines of that country. On a certain occasion, he dined with his clerical brother, who after dinner gave him a glass of this beverage. The visitor having tasted it, shrugged his shoulders, and made wry faces.

"Where did you get this liquor, brother?" said he

"Why it is some that was left over from the sacrament, and my deacons sent it to me."

"I don't wonder, brother," was the reply, "that your church is so small, now that I know what wine you give them."

There was, of course, no baker in Ridgefield; each family not only made its own bread, cakes, and pies, but their own soap, candles, butter, cheese, and the like. The fabrication of cloth, linen, and woolen was no less a domestic operation. Cotton—that is, raw cotton—was then wholly unknown among us at the North, except as a mere curiosity, produced some where in the tropics; but whether it grew on a plant, or an animal, was not clearly settled in the public mind.

We raised our own flax, rotted it, hackled it, dressed it, and spun it. The little wheel, turned by the foot, had its place, and was as familiar as if it had been a member of the family. How often have I seen my mother, and my grandmother too, sit down to it—though this, as I remember, was for the purpose of spinning some finer kind of thread—the burden of the spinning being done by a neighbor of ours, Sally St. John. By the way, she was a good-hearted, cheerful old maid, who petted me beyond my deserts. I grieve to say, that I repaid her partiality by many mischievous pranks, for which I should have been roundly punished, had not the good creature, like charity, covered a multitude of sins. I did indeed

get filliped for catching her foot one day in a steel-trap, but I declare that I was innocent of malice prepense, inasmuch as I had set the trap for a rat instead of the said Sally. Nevertheless, the verdict was against me, not wholly because of my misdemeanor in this particular instance, but partly upon the general theory that if I did not deserve punishment for that, I had deserved it, and should deserve it for something else, and so it was safe to administer it.

The wool was also spun in the family, partly by my sisters, and partly by Molly Gregory, daughter of our neighbor, the town carpenter. I remember her well as she sang and spun aloft in the attic. In those days, church singing was one of the fine arts—the only one, indeed, which flourished in Ridgefield, except the music of the drum and fife. The choir was divided into four parts, ranged on three sides of the meeting-house gallery. The tenor, led by Deacon Hawley, was in front of the pulpit, the base to the left, and the treble and counter to the right*—the whole being set in motion by a pitch-pipe, made by the deacon himself, who was a cabinet-maker. Molly took upon herself the entire counter, for she had excellent lungs. The fuging tunes, which had then run a little mad, were her delight, and of all these, Montgomery was the general favorite. In her solitary operations aloft, I have often heard

* This separation of a choir is seldom practiced now in our churches, but was in general use at this period.

her send forth from the attic windows, the droning hum of her wheel, with fitful snatches of a hymn, in which the base began, the tenor followed, then the treble, and finally, the counter—winding up with irresistible pathos. Molly singing to herself, and all unconscious of eavesdroppers, carried on all the parts, thus:

Base. "Long for a cooling—
Tenor. "Long for a cooling—
Treble. "Long for a cooling—
Counter. "Long for a cooling stream at hand,
And they must drink or die!"

The knitting of stockings was performed by the female part of the family in the evening, and especially at tea parties. According to the theory of society in that golden age, this was a moral as well as an economical employment, inasmuch as Satan was held to find

"Some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

Satan, however, dodged the question, for if the hands were occupied, the tongue was loose; and it was said that in some families, he kept them well occupied with idle gossip. At all events, pianos, chessboards, graces, battledoors, and shuttlecocks, with other safety-valves of the kind, were only known by the hearing of the ear, as belonging to some such Vanity Fair as New York or Boston.

The weaving of cloth—linen, as well as woolen—was performed by an itinerant workman, who came to the house, put up his loom, and threw his shuttle, till the season's work was done. The linen was bleached, and made up by the family; the woolen cloth was sent to the fuller to be dyed and dressed. Twice a year, that is, in the spring and autumn, the tailor came to the house and fabricated the semi-annual stock of clothes for the male members—this being called "whipping the cat."

Mantuamakers and milliners came in their turn, to fit out the female members of the family. There was a similar process as to boots and shoes. We sent the hides of the cattle—cows and calves we had killed—to the tanner, and these came back in assorted leather. Occasionally a little morocco, then wholly a foreign manufacture, was bought at the store, and made up for the ladies' best shoes. Amby Benedict, the circulating shoemaker, upon due notice, came with his bench, lapstone, and awls, and converted some little room into a shop, till the household was duly shod. He was a merry fellow, and threw in lots of singing gratis. He played all the popular airs upon his lapstone—as hurdygurdies and hand-organs do now.

Carpets were then only known in a few families, and were confined to the keeping-room and parlor. They were all home-made: the warp consisting of woolen yarn, and the woof of lists and old woolen

cloth, cut into strips, and sewed together at the ends. Coverlids generally consisted of quilts, made of pieces of waste calico, elaborately sewed together in octagons, and quilted in rectangles, giving the whole a gay and rich appearance. This process of quilting generally brought together the women of the neighborhood, married and single, and a great time they had of it—what with tea, talk, and stitching. In the evening, the beaux were admitted, so that a quilting was a real festival, not unfrequently getting young people into entanglements which matrimony alone could unravel.

I am here reminded of a sort of communism or socialism which prevailed in our rural districts long before Owen or Fourier was born. If some old Arcadian of the golden age had written his life, as I now write mine, I have no doubt that it would have appeared that this system existed then and there, and that these pretended inventors were mere imitators. At all events, at Ridgefield we used to have "stone bees," when all the men of a village or hamlet came together with their draft cattle, and united to clear some patch of earth which had been stigmatized by nature with an undue visitation of stones and rocks. All this labor was gratuitously rendered, save only that the proprietor of the land furnished the grog. Such a meeting was always of course a very social and sociable affair. When the work was done, gymnastic exercises—such as hopping, wrestling, and foot-

racing—took place among the athletic young men My father generally attended these celebrations as a looker-on. It was indeed the custom for the clergy of the olden time, to mingle with the people, even in their labors and their pastimes. For some reason or other, it seemed that things went better when the parson gave them his countenance. I followed my father's example, and attended these cheerful and beneficial gatherings. Most of the boys of the town did the same. I may add that, if I may trust the traditions of Ridgefield, the cellar of our new house was dug by a *bee* in a single day, and that was Christmas.

House-raising and barn-raising, the framework being always of wood, were done in the same way by a neighborly gathering of the people. I remember an anecdote of a church-raising, which I may as well relate here. In the eastern part of the State, I think at Lyme, or Pautipaug, a meeting-house was destroyed by lightning. After a year or two, the society mustered its energies, and raised the frame of another on the site of the old one. It stood about six months, and was then blown over.

In due time, another frame was prepared, and the neighborhood gathered together to raise it. It was now proposed by Deacon Hart that they should commence the performances by a prayer and hymn, it having been suggested that perhaps the want of these pious preliminaries on former occasions, had something to

do with the calamitous results which attended them. When all was ready, therefore, a prayer was made, and the chorister of the place deaconed* the first two lines of the hymn thus:

> "If God to build the house deny,
> The builders work in vain."

This being sung, the chorister completed the verse thus, adapting the lines to the occasion:

> "Unless the Lord doth shingle it,
> It will blow down again!"

I must not fail to give you a portrait of one of our village homes—of the middle class—at this era. I take as an example that of our neighbor, J..... B.... who had been a tailor, but having thriven in his affairs, and now advanced to the age of some fifty years, had become a farmer—such a career, by the way, being common at the time; for the prudent mechanic, adding to his house and his lands, as his necessities and his thrift dictated, usually ended as the proprietor of an ample house, fifty to a hundred acres of land, and an ample barn, stocked with half

* Deaconing a hymn or psalm, was adopted on occasions when there was but a single book, or perhaps but one or two books, at hand—a circumstance more common fifty years ago, when singing-books were scarce, than at present, when books of all kinds render food for the mind as cheap and abundant as that for the body. In such cases, the leader of the choir, or the deacon, or some other person, read a verse, or perhaps two lines of a hymn, which being sung, other stanzas were read, and then sung in the same way.

a dozen cows, one or two horses, a flock of sheep, and a general assortment of poultry.

The home of this, our neighbor B....., was situated on the road leading to Salem, there being a wide space in front occupied by the wood-pile, which in these days was not only a matter of great importance, but of formidable bulk. The size of the wood-pile was indeed in some sort an index to the rank and condition of the proprietor. The house itself was a low edifice, forty feet long, and of two stories in front; the rear being what was called a *breakback*, that is, sloping down to a height of ten feet; this low part furnishing a shelter for garden tools, and various household instruments. The whole was constructed of wood; the outside being of the dun complexion assumed by unpainted wood, exposed to the weather for twenty or thirty years, save only that the roof was tinged of a reddish-brown by a fine moss that found sustenance in the chestnut shingles.

To the left was the garden, which in the productive season was a wilderness of onions, squashes, cucumbers, beets, parsnips, and currants, with the never-failing tansey for bitters, horseradish for seasoning, and fennel for keeping old women awake in church time. A sprig of fennel was in fact the theological smelling-bottle of the tender sex, and not unfrequently of the men, who, from long sitting in the sanctuary—after a week of labor in the field—found themselves too strongly tempted to visit the forbidden

land of Nod—would sometimes borrow a sprig of fennel, and exorcise the fiend that threatened their spiritual welfare.

The interior of the house presented a parlor with plain, whitewashed walls, a home-made carpet upon the floor, calico curtains at the window, and a mirror three feet by two against the side, with a mahogany frame: to these must be added eight chairs and a cherry table, of the manufacture of Deacon Hawley. The keeping or sitting room had also a carpet, a dozen rush-bottom chairs, a table, &c. The kitchen was large—fully twenty feet square, with a fireplace six feet wide and four feet deep. On one side, it looked out upon the garden, the squashes and cucumbers climbing up and forming festoons over the door; on the other a view was presented of the orchard, embracing first a circle of peaches, pears, and plums, and beyond, a wide-spread clover field, embowered with apple-trees. Just by, was the well, with its tall sweep, the old oaken bucket dangling from the pole. The kitchen was in fact the most comfortable room in the house; cool in summer, and perfumed with the breath of the garden and the orchard: in winter, with its roaring blaze of hickory, it was a cosy resort, defying the bitterest blasts of the season. Here the whole family assembled at meals, save only when the presence of company made it proper to serve tea in the parlor.

The chambers were all without carpets, and the

furniture was generally of a simple character. The beds, however, were of ample size, and well filled with geese feathers, these being deemed essential for comfortable people. I must say, by the way, that every decent family had its flock of geese, of course, which was picked thrice a year, despite the noisy remonstrances of both goose and gander. The sheets of the bed, though of home-made linen, were as white as the driven snow. Indeed, the beds of this era showed that sleep was a luxury, well understood and duly cherished by all classes. The cellar, extending under the whole house, was a vast receptacle, and by no means the least important part of the establishment. In the autumn, it was supplied with three barrels of beef and as many of pork, twenty barrels of cider, with numerous bins of potatoes, turnips, beets, carrots, and cabbages. The garret, which was of huge dimensions, at the same time displayed a labyrinth of dried pumpkins, peaches, and apples—hung in festoons upon the rafters, amid bunches of summer savory, boneset, fennel, and other herbs—the floor being occupied by heaps of wool, flax, tow, and the like.

The barn corresponded to the house. It was a low brown structure, having abundance of sheds built on to it, without the least regard to symmetry. I need not say it was well stocked with hay, oats, rye, and buckwheat. Six cows, one or two horses, three dozen sheep, and an ample supply of poultry, including two

or three broods of turkeys, constituted its living tenants.

The farm I need not describe in detail, but the orchard must not be overlooked. This consisted of three acres, covered, as I have said, with apple-trees, yielding abundantly—as well for the cider-mill as for the table, including the indispensable winter apple-sauce—according to their kinds. In the spring, an apple orchard is one of the most beautiful objects in the world. No tree or shrub presents a bloom at once so gorgeous, and so fragrant. Just at this time it is the paradise of the bees and the birds—the former filling the air with their gentle murmurs, and the latter celebrating their nuptials with all the frolic and fun of a universal jubilee. How often have I ventured into Uncle Josey's ample orchard at this joyous season, and stood entranced among the robins, blackbirds, woodpeckers, bluebirds, jays, and orioles, —all seeming to me like playmates, racing, chasing, singing, rollicking, in the exuberance of their joy, or perchance slyly pursuing their courtships, or even more slyly building their nests, and rearing their young.

The inmates of the house I need not describe, further than to say that Uncle Josey himself was a little deaf, and of moderate capacity, yet he lived to good account, for he reared a large family, and was gathered to his fathers at a good old age, leaving behind him a handsome estate, a fair name, and a safe

example. His wife, who spent her early life at service in a kitchen, was a handsome, lively, efficient woman, mother of a large and prosperous family, and a universal favorite in the neighborhood. She is still living in a green old age, with several generations of descendants, who call down blessings on her name.

This is the homely picture of a Ridgefield farmer's home, half a century ago. There were other establishments more extensive and more sumptuous in the town, as there were others also of an inferior grade. Yet this was a fair sample of the houses, barns, and farms of the middle class—the majority of the people. Since then the times have changed, as I shall hereafter show: the general standard of living has in all things improved; but still the same elements of thrift, economy, piety, prudence, and progress are visible on every side. Uncle Josey's house is still standing; its exterior shows no coat of paint, but the interior displays Kidderminster carpets—made at Enfield or Lowell—mahogany bureaus, gilt looking-glasses, and a small well-filled mahogany bookcase.

LETTER VII.

Domestic Habits of the People—Meals—Servants and Masters—Dress—Amusements — Festivals — Marriages — Funerals — Dancing — Winter Sports—Up and Down—My Two Grandmothers.

My Dear C******

You will gather from my preceding letter, some ideas of the household industry and occupations of country people in Connecticut, at the beginning of the present century. Their manners, in other respects, had a corresponding stamp of homeliness and simplicity.

In most families, the first exercise of the morning was reading the Bible, followed by a prayer, at which all were assembled, including the servants and helpers of the kitchen and the farm. Then came the breakfast, which was a substantial meal, always including hot viands, with vegetables, apple-sauce, pickles, mustard, horseradish, and various other condiments. Cider was the common drink for laboring people; even children drank it at will. Tea was common, but not so general as now. Coffee was almost unknown. Dinner was a still more hearty and varied repast—characterized by abundance of garden vegetables; tea was a light supper.

The day began early: breakfast was had at six in summer and seven in winter; dinner at noon—the

work people in the fields being called to their meals by a conch-shell, usually winded by some kitchen Triton. The echoing of this noon-tide horn, from farm to farm, and over hill and dale, was a species of music which even rivaled the popular melody of drum and fife. Tea—the evening meal, usually took place about sundown. In families where all were laborers, all sat at table, servants as well as masters—the food being served before sitting down. In families where the masters and mistresses did not share the labors of the household or the farm, the meals of the domestics were had separate. There was, however, in those days a perfectly good understanding and good feeling between the masters and servants. The latter were not Irish; they had not as yet imbibed the plebeian envy of those above them, which has since so generally embittered and embarrassed American domestic life. The terms democrat and aristocrat had not got into use: these distinctions, and the feelings now implied by them, had indeed no existence in the hearts of the people. Our servants, during all my early life, were of the neighborhood, generally the daughters of respectable farmers and mechanics, and respecting others, were themselves respected and cherished. They were devoted to the interests of the family, and were always relied upon and treated as friends. In health, they had the same food; in sickness, the same care as the masters and mistresses or their children. This servitude implied no degra-

dation, because it did not degrade the heart or manners of those subjected to it. It was never thought of as a reproach to a man or woman—in the stations they afterwards filled—that he or she had been out to service. If servitude has since become associated with debasement, it is only because servants themselves, under the bad guidance of demagogues, have lowered their calling by low feelings and low manners.

At the period of my earliest recollections, men of all classes were dressed in long, broad-tailed coats, with huge pockets, long waistcoats, and breeches. Hats had low crowns, with broad brims—some so wide as to be supported at the sides with cords. The stockings of the parson, and a few others, were of silk in summer and worsted in winter; those of the people were generally of wool, and blue and gray mixed. Women dressed in wide bonnets—sometimes of straw and sometimes of silk: the gowns were of silk, muslin, gingham, &c.—generally close and short-waisted, the breast and shoulders being covered by a full muslin kerchief. Girls ornamented themselves with a large white Vandyke. On the whole, the dress of both men and women has greatly changed. As to the former, short, snug, close-fitting garments have succeeded to the loose latitudinarian coats of former times: stove-pipe hats have followed broad brims, and pantaloons have taken the place of breeches. With the other sex—little French bon-

nets, set round with glowing flowers, flourish in the place of the plain, yawning hats of yore; then it was as much an effort to make the waists short, as it is now to make them long. As to the hips, which now make so formidable a display—it seems to me that in the days I allude to, ladies had none to speak of.

The amusements were then much the same as at present—though some striking differences may be noted. Books and newspapers—which are now diffused even among the country towns, so as to be in the hands of all, young and old—were then scarce, and were read respectfully, and as if they were grave matters, demanding thought and attention. They were not toys and pastimes, taken up every day, and by everybody, in the short intervals of labor, and then hastily dismissed, like waste paper. The aged sat down when they read, and drew forth their spectacles, and put them deliberately and reverently upon the nose. These instruments were not as now, little tortoise-shell hooks, attached to a ribbon, and put off and on with a jerk; but they were of silver or steel, substantially made, and calculated to hold on with a firm and steady grasp, showing the gravity of the uses to which they were devoted. Even the young approached a book with reverence, and a newspaper with awe. How the world has changed!

The two great festivals were Thanksgiving and 'training-day"—the latter deriving, from the still lingering spirit of the revolutionary war, a decidedly

martial character. The marching of the troops, and the discharge of gunpowder, which invariably closed the exercises, were glorious and inspiring mementoes of heroic achievements, upon many a bloody field. The music of the drum and fife resounded on every side. A match between two rival drummers always drew an admiring crowd, and was in fact one of the chief excitements of the great day.

Tavern haunting—especially in winter, when there was little to do—for manufactures had not then sprung up to give profitable occupation, during this inclement season—was common, even with respectable farmers. Marriages were celebrated in the evening, at the house of the bride, with a general gathering of the neighborhood, and usually wound off by dancing. Everybody went, as to a public exhibition, without invitation. Funerals generally drew large processions, which proceeded to the grave. Here the minister always made an address, suited to the occasion. If there was any thing remarkable in the history of the deceased, it was turned to religious account in the next Sunday's sermon. Singing meetings, to practice church music, were a great resource for the young, in winter. Dances at private houses were common, and drew no reproaches from the sober people present. Balls at the taverns were frequented by the young; the children of deacons and ministers attended, though the parents did not. The winter brought sleighing, skating, and the usual round of indoor sports. In

general, the intercourse of all classes was kindly and considerate—no one arrogating superiority, and yet no one refusing to acknowledge it, where it existed. You would hardly have noticed that there was a higher and a lower class. Such there were certainly, for there must always and everywhere be the strong and the weak, the wise and the foolish—those of superior and those of inferior intellect, taste, manners, appearance, and character. But in our society, these existed without being felt as a privilege to one which must give offence to another. The feuds between Up and Down, which have since disturbed the whole fabric of society, had not then begun.

It may serve, in some degree, to throw light upon the manners and customs of this period, if I give you a sketch of my two grandmothers. Both were widows, and were well stricken in years, when they came to visit us at Ridgefield—about the year 1803 or 4. My grandmother Ely was of the old regime—a lady of the old school, and sustaining the character in her upright carriage, her long, tapering waist, and her high-heeled shoes. The costumes of Louis XV.'s time had prevailed in New York and Boston, and even at this period they still lingered there, in isolated cases, though the Revolution had generally exercised a transforming influence upon the toilet of both men and women. It is curious enough that at this moment—1855—the female attire of a century ago is revived; and in every black-eyed,

stately old lady, dressed in black silk, and showing her steel-gray hair beneath her cap, I can now see semblances of this, my maternal grandmother.

My other grandmother was in all things the opposite: short, fat, blue-eyed, practical, utilitarian. She was a good example of the country dame—hearty, homespun, familiar, full of strong sense and practical energy. I scarcely know which of the two I liked the best. The first sang me plaintive songs; told me stories of the Revolution—her husband, Col. Ely, having had a large and painful share in its vicissitudes; she described Gen. Washington, whom she had seen; and the French officers, Lafayette, Rochambeau, and others, who had been inmates of her house. She told me tales of even more ancient date, and recited poetry, generally consisting of ballads, which were suited to my taste. And all this lore was commended to me by a voice of inimitable tenderness, and a manner at once lofty and condescending. My other grandmother was not less kind, but she promoted my happiness and prosperity in another way. Instead of stories, she gave me bread and butter: in place of poetry, she fed me with apple-sauce and pie. Never was there a more hearty old lady: she had a firm conviction that children must be fed, and what she believed, she practiced.

LETTER VIII.

Interest in Mechanical Devices—Agriculture—My Parents Design me for a Carpenter—The Dawn of the Age of Invention—Fulton, &c.—Perpetual Motion—Whittling—Gentlemen—St. Paul, King Alfred, Daniel Webster, &c.—Desire of Improvement, a New England Characteristic—Hunting—The Bow and Arrow—The Fowling-piece—Pigeons—Anecdote of Parson M....—Audubon and Wilson—The Passenger Pigeon—Sporting Rambles—The Blacksnake and Screech-owl—Fishing—Advantages of Country Life and Country Training.

My dear C******

I can recollect with great vividness the interest I took in the domestic events I have described, and which circled with the seasons in our household at this period. I had no great interest in the operations of the farm. Plowing, hoeing, digging, seemed to me mere drudgery, imparting no instruction, and affording no scope for ingenuity or invention. I had not yet learned to contemplate agriculture in its economical aspect, nor had my mind yet risen to that still higher view of husbandry, which leads to a scientific study of the soil and the seasons, and teaches man to become a kind of second Providence to those portions of the earth which are subjected to his care.

The mechanical operations I have described, as well as others—especially those of the weaver and carpenter, on the contrary, stimulated my curiosity, and excited my emulation. Thus I soon became familiar with the tools of the latter, and made such windmills,

kites, and perpetual motions, as to extort the admiration of my playmates, and excite the respect of my parents, so that they seriously meditated putting me apprentice to a carpenter. Up to the age of fourteen, I think this was regarded as my manifest destiny. I certainly took great delight in mechanical devices, and became a celebrity on pine shingles with a penknife. It was a day of great endeavors among all inventive geniuses. Fulton was struggling to develop steam navigation, and other discoverers were thundering at the gates of knowledge, and seeking to unfold the wonders of art as well as of nature. It was, in fact, the very threshold of the era of steamboats, railroads, electric telegraphs, and a thousand other useful discoveries, which have since changed the face of the world. In this age of excitement, perpetual motion was the great hobby of aspiring mechanics, as it has been indeed ever since. I pondered and whittled intensely on this subject before I was ten years old. Despairing of reaching my object by mechanical means, I attempted to arrive at it by magnetism, my father having bought me a pair of horse-shoe magnets in one of his journeys to New Haven. I should have succeeded, had it not been a principle in the nature of this curious element, that no substance will instantly intercept the stream of attraction. I tried to change the poles, and turn the north against the south; but there too nature had headed me, and of course I failed.

A word, by the way, on the matter of whittling. This is generally represented as a sort of idle, fidgety, frivolous use of the penknife, and is set down by amiable foreigners and sketchers of American manners as a peculiar characteristic of our people. No portrait of an American is deemed complete, whether in the saloon or the senate-chamber, at home or on the highway, unless with penknife and shingle in hand. I feel not the slightest disposition to resent even this, among the thousand caricatures that pass for traits of American life. For my own part, I can testify that, during my youthful days, I found the penknife a source of great amusement and even of instruction. Many a long winter evening, many a dull, drizzly day, in spring and summer and autumn—sometimes at the kitchen fireside, sometimes in the attic, amid festoons of dried apples, peaches, and pumpkins; sometimes in a cosy nook of the barn; sometimes in the shelter of a neighboring stone-wall, thatched over with wild grape-vines—have I spent in great ecstasy, making candle-rods, or some other simple article of household goods, for my mother, or in perfecting toys for myself and my young friends, or perhaps in attempts at more ambitious achievements. This was not mere waste of time, mere idleness and dissipation. I was amused: that was something. Some of the pleasantest remembrances of my childhood carry me back to the scenes I have just indicated, when in happy solitude, absorbed in my me-

chanical devices, I still listened to the rain pattering upon the roof, or the wind roaring down the chimney —thus enjoying a double bliss—a pleasing occupation, with a conscious delight in my sense of security from the rage of the elements without.

Nay more — these occupations were instructive: my mind was stimulated to inquire into the mechanical powers, and my hand was educated to mechanical dexterity. Smile, if you please—but reflect! Why is it, that we in the United States surpass all other nations, in the excellence of our tools of all kinds? Why are our axes, knives, hoes, spades, plows, the best in the world? Because—in part, at least—we learn, in early life, this alphabet of mechanics theoretical and practical—*whittling*. Nearly every head and hand is trained to it. We know and feel the difference between dull and sharp tools. At ten years old, we are all epicures in cutting instruments. This is the beginning, and we go on, as a matter of course, toward perfection. The inventive head, and the skillful, executing hand, thus become general, national, characteristic among us.

I am perfectly aware that some people, in this country as well as others, despise labor, and especially manual labor, as ungenteel. There are people in these United States who scoff at New England on account of this general use of thrifty, productive industry, among our people as a point of education. The gentleman, say these refined persons, must not

work. It is not easy to cite a higher example of a gentleman—in thought, feeling, and manner—than St. Paul, and he was a tent-maker: King Alfred was a gentleman, and he could turn his hand to servile labor. But let me refer to New England examples. Daniel Webster was a gentleman, and he began with the scythe and the plow; Abbot Lawrence was a gentleman, and he served through every grade, an apprenticeship to his profession; Timothy Dwight was a gentleman, and was trained to the positive labors of the farm; Franklin, the printer; Sherman, the shoemaker; Ellsworth, the teamster—all were gentlemen, and of that high order which regards truth, honor, manliness, as its essential basis. Nothing, in my view, is more despicable, nothing more calculated to diffuse and cherish a debasing effeminacy of body and soul, than the doctrine that labor is degrading. Where such ideas prevail, rottenness lies at the foundation of society.

But to go back to my theme. If you ask me why it is that this important institution of whittling is indigenous among us, I reply, that, in the first place, our country is full of a great variety of woods, suited to carpentry, many of them easily wrought, and thus inviting boyhood to try its hands upon them. In the next place, labor is dear, and therefore even children are led to supply themselves with toys, or perchance to furnish some of the simpler articles of use to the household. This dearness

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of labor, moreover, furnishes a powerful stimulant to the production of labor-saving machines, and hence it is—through all these causes, co-operating one with another—that steam navigation, the electric telegraph, the steam reaper, &c., &c., are American inventions : hence it is that, whether it be at the World's Fair in London or Paris, we gain a greater proportion of prizes for useful inventions, than any other people. That is what comes of whittling!

There is no doubt another element to be considered in a close and philosophical view of what I state—this aptitude of our people, especially those of New England, for mechanical invention. The desire of improvement is inherent in the New England character. This springs from two principles: first, a moral sense, founded upon religious ideas, making it the duty of every man to seek constantly to be and do better, day by day, as he advances in life. This is the great main-spring, set in the heart by Puritanism. Its action reaches alike to time and to eternity. Mr. Webster well illustrated the New England character in this respect, when he describes his father as "shrinking from no toil, no sacrifice, to serve his country, and to raise his children to a condition better than his own." This desire of improvement is indeed extended to the children, and animates the bosom of every parent.

The other principle I allude to is liberty, civil and social—actual and practical. New England is

probably the only country in the world, where every man, generally speaking, has or can have the means —that is, the money, the intelligence, the knowledge, the power—to choose his career; to say where he will live, what profession he will follow, what position he will occupy.

It is this moral sense, in every man's bosom, impelling him to seek improvement in all things, cooperating with this liberty, giving him the right and the ability to seek happiness in his own way —which forms this universal spirit of improvement —the distinguishing feature of the New England people. It is this which has conquered our savage climate, subdued the forests, and planted the whole country with smiling towns and villages: it is this which has established a system of universal education, cherished religion, promoted literature, founded benign institutions, perfected our political system, and abolished negro slavery, imposed upon us by the mother country.

It is easy to trace the operations of this principle in the humblest as well as the highest classes. The man at the plow is not a mere drudge: he is not like the debased subject of European despotism, a servile tool, an unthinking, unhoping, unaspiring animal, to use his muscles, without thought as to the result of his labor. Let me tell you an anecdote which will illustrate this matter. Some years ago, a young New Englander found himself in the back parts of Penn-

sylvania, ashore as to the means of living. In this strait he applied to a wealthy Quaker in the neighborhood for help.

"I will furnish thee with work, and pay thee for it, friend," said the Quaker; "but it is not my custom to give alms to one able to labor, like thee."

"Well, that's all I want," said the Yankee: "of course I am willing to work."

"What can thee do, friend?"

"Any thing. I will do any thing, to get a little money, to help me out of my difficulties."

"Well—there is a log yonder; and there is an axe. Thee may pound on the log with the head of the axe, and if thee is diligent and faithful, I will pay thee a dollar a day."

"Agreed: I'd as soon do that as any thing else."

And so the youth went to work, and pounded lustily with the head of the axe upon the log. After a time he paused to take breath; then he began again. But after half an hour he stopped, threw down the axe impatiently, and walked away, saying, "I'll be hanged if I'll cut wood without seeing the chips fly!"

Thus the Yankee laborer has a mind that must be contented: he looks to the result of his labor; and if his tools or implements are imperfect, his first impulse is to improve them, and finally to perfect them. In this endeavor, he is of course aided by the mechanical aptitude, to which I have already alluded; and hence it is, that not only our utensils, for every

species of common work, but our machines generally for the saving of labor, are thus excellent. With what painful sympathy have I seen the peasants in ingenious France and classic Italy sweating and toiling with uncouth, unhandy implements, which have undergone no improvement for a thousand years, and which abundantly bespeak the despotism which for that period has kept their minds as well as their bodies in bondage! You will not wonder that such observations have carried me back to my native New England, and taught me to appreciate the character and institutions of its people.

I must add, in descending from this lofty digression to my simpler story, that in these early days, I was a Nimrod, a mighty hunter—first with a bow and arrow, and afterward with the old hereditary firelock, which snapped six times and went off once. The smaller kinds of game were abundant. The thickets teemed with quails;* partridges drummed in every wood; the gray-squirrel—the most picturesque animal of our forests—enlivened every hickory copse with his mocking laugh, his lively gambols, and his long bannered tail. The pigeons in spring and autumn migrated in countless flocks, and many lingered in our woods for the season.

Everybody was then a hunter, not of course a

* The American quail is a species of partridge, in size between the European quail and partridge. The *partridge* of New England is the *pheasant* of the South, and the *ruffed grouse* of the naturalists.

sportsman, for the chase was followed more for profit than for pastime. Game was, in point of fact, a substantial portion of the supply of food at certain seasons of the year. All were then good shots, and my father could not be an exception: he was even beyond his generation in netting pigeons. This was not deemed a reproach at that time in a clergyman, nor was he the only parson that indulged in these occupations. One day, as I was with him on West Mountain, baiting pigeons, we had seduced a flock of three or four dozen down into the bed where they were feeding—my father and myself lying concealed in our bush-hut, close by. Suddenly, whang went a gun into the middle of the flock! Out we ran in great indignation, for at least a dozen of the birds were bleeding and fluttering before us. Scarcely had we reached the spot, when we met Parson M.... of Lower Salem, who had thus unwittingly poached upon us. The two clergymen had first a flurry and then a good laugh, after which they divided the plunder and parted.

The stories told by Wilson and Audubon as to the amazing quantity of pigeons in the West, were realized by us in Connecticut half a century ago. I have seen a stream of these noble birds, pouring at brief intervals through the skies, from the rising to the setting sun, and this in the county of Fairfield. I may here add, that of all the pigeon tribe, this of our country—the passenger pigeon—is the swiftest and most

beautiful of a swift and beautiful generation. At the same time it is unquestionably superior to any other for the table. All the other species of the eastern as well as the western continent, which I have tasted, are soft and flavorless in comparison.

I can recollect no sports of my youth which equaled in excitement our pigeon hunts, generally taking place in September and October. We usually started on horseback before daylight, and made a rapid progress to some stubble-field on West Mountain. The ride in the keen, fresh air, especially as the dawn began to break, was delightful. The gradual encroachment of day upon the night, filled my mind with sublime images: the waking up of a world from sleep, the joyousness of birds and beasts in the return of morning, and my own sympathy in this cheerful and grateful homage of the heart to God, the Giver of good—all contributed to render these adventures most impressive upon my young heart. My memory is still full of the sights and sounds of those glorious mornings: the silvery whistle of the wings of migrating flocks of plover—invisible in the gray mists of dawn; the faint murmur of the distant mountain torrents; the sonorous gong of the long-trailing flocks of wild geese, seeming to come from the unseen depths of the skies—these were among the suggestive sounds that stole through the dim twilight. As morning advanced, the scene was inconceivably beautiful—the mountain sides, clothed in autumnal

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green and purple and gold, rendered more glowing by the sunrise—with the valleys covered with mists and spreading out like lakes of silver; while on every side the ear was saluted by the mocking screams of the red-headed woodpecker, the cawing of congresses of crows, clamorous as if talking to Buncombe; and finally the rushing sound of the pigeons, pouring like a tide over the tops of the trees.

By this time of course our nets were ready, and our flyers and stool-birds on the alert. What moments of ecstasy were these, and especially when the head of the flock—some red-breasted old father or grandfather—caught the sight of our pigeons, and turning at the call, drew the whole train down into our net-bed. I have often seen a hundred, or two hundred of these splendid birds, come upon us, with a noise absolutely deafening, and sweeping the air with a sudden gust, like the breath of a thunder-cloud. Sometimes our bush-hut, where we lay concealed, was covered all over with pigeons, and we dared not move a finger, as their red, piercing eyes were upon us. When at last, with a sudden pull of the rope, the net was sprung, and we went out to secure our booty—often fifty, and sometimes even a hundred birds—I felt a fullness of triumph, which words are wholly inadequate to express!

Up to the age of eight years, I was never trusted with a gun. Whenever I went forth as a sportsman on my own account, it was only with a bow and arrow.

If I failed in achievement, I made up for it in vivid feelings and imaginings. The intensity of my perceptions on these occasions, are among my most distinct recollections. Every bird that flew, every sound that trembled in the air, every copse and thicket, every hill and dale—every thing that my senses realized, my memory daguerreotyped. Afterward, when I arrived at the honors of shot-pouch and powder-horn, I roamed the country far and wide, over mountain and dell, with a similar vivacity of experience. My performances as a hunter were very moderate. In truth, I had a rickety old gun, that had belonged to my grandfather, and though it perhaps had done good service in the Revolution, or further back in the times of bears and wolves, it was now very decrepit, and all around the lock seemed to have the shaking palsy. Occasionally I met with adventures —half serious and half ludicrous. Once, in running my hand into a hole in a hollow tree, some twenty feet from the ground, being in search of a woodpecker, I hauled out a blacksnake. At another time, in a similar way, I had my fingers pretty sharply nipped by a screech-owl. My memory supplies me with numerous instances of this kind.

As to fishing, I never had a passion for it; I was too impatient. I had no enthusiasm for nibbles, and there were too many of these in proportion to the bites. I perhaps resembled a man by the name of Bennett, who joined the Shakers of New Canaan

about these days, but soon left them, declaring that the Spirit was too long in coming—"he could not wait." Nevertheless, I dreamed away some pleasant hours in angling in the brooks and ponds of my native town. I well remember that on my eighth birthday, I went four miles to Burt's mills, carrying on the old mare two bushels of rye. While my grist was grinding, I angled in the pond, and carried home enough for a generous meal.

Now all these things may seem trifles, yet in a review of my life, I deem them of some significance. This homely familiarity with the more mechanical arts was a material part of my education; this communion with nature gave me instructive and important lessons from nature's open book of knowledge. My technical education, as will be seen hereafter, was extremely narrow and irregular. This defect was at least partially supplied by the commonplace incidents I have mentioned. The teaching, or rather the training of the senses, in the country—ear and eye, foot and hand, by running, leaping, climbing over hill and mountain, by occasional labor in the garden and on the farm, and by the use of tools—and all this in youth, is sowing seed which is repaid largely and readily to the hand of after cultivation, however unskillful it may be. This is not so much because of the amount of knowledge available in after-life, which is thus obtained—though this is not to be despised—as it is that healthful, vigorous, manly habits and

associations — physical, moral, and intellectual — are thus established and developed.

It is a riddle to many people that the emigrants from the country into the city, in all ages, outstrip the natives, and become their masters. The reason is obvious: country education and country life are practical, and invigorating to body and mind, and hence those who are thus qualified triumph in the race of life. It has always been, it will always be so; the rustic Goths and Vandals will march in and conquer Rome, in the future, as they have done in the past. I say this, by no means insisting that my own life furnishes any very striking proof of the truth of my remarks; still, I may say that but for the country training and experience I have alluded to, and which served as a foothold for subsequent progress, I should have lingered in my career far behind the humble advances I have actually made.

Let me illustrate and verify my meaning by specific examples. In my youth I became familiar with every bird common to the country: I knew his call, his song, his hue, his food, his habits; in short, his natural history. I could detect him by his flight, as far as the eye could reach. I knew all the quadrupeds — wild as well as tame. I was acquainted with almost every tree, shrub, bush, and flower, indigenous to the country; not botanically, but according to popular ideas. I recognized them instantly, wherever I saw them; I knew their forms, hues, leaves,

blossoms, and fruit. I could tell their characteristics, their uses, the legends and traditions that belonged to them. All this I learned by familiarity with these objects; meeting with them in all my walks and rambles, and taking note of them with the emphasis and vigor of early experience and observation. In after days, I have never had time to make natural history a systematic study; yet my knowledge as to these things has constantly accumulated, and that without special effort. When I have traveled in other countries, the birds, the animals, the vegetation, have interested me as well by their resemblances as their differences, when compared with our own. In looking over the pages of scientific works on natural history, I have always read with the eagerness and intelligence of preparation; indeed, of vivid and pleasing associations. Every idea I had touching these matters was living and sympathetic, and beckoned other ideas to it, and these again originated still others. Thus it is that in the race of a busy life, by means of a homely, hearty start at the beginning, I have, as to these subjects, easily and naturally supplied, in some humble degree, the defects of my irregular education, and that too, not by a process of repulsive toil, but with a relish superior to all the seductions of romance. I am therefore a believer in the benefits accruing from simple country life and simple country habits, as here illustrated, and am therefore, on all occasions, anxious to recommend them to my

friends and countrymen. To city people, I would say, educate your children, at least partially, in the country, so as to imbue them with the love of nature, and that knowledge and training which spring from simple rustic sports, exercises, and employments. To country people, I would remark, be not envious of the city, for in the general balance of good and evil, you have your full portion of the first, with a diminished share of the last.

LETTER IX.

Death of Washington—Jefferson and Democracy—Ridgefield on the Great Thoroughfare between New York and Boston—Jerome Bonaparte and his Young Wife—Oliver Wolcott, Governor Treadwell, and Deacon Olmstead—Inauguration of Jefferson—Jerry Mead and Ensign Keeler—Democracy and Federalism—Charter of Charles II.—Elizur Goodrich, Deacon Bishop, and President Jefferson—Abraham Bishop and "About Enough Democracy."

My dear C******

The incidents I have just related revolved about the period of 1800—some a little earlier and some a little later. Among the events of general interest that occurred near this time, I remember the death of Washington, which took place in 1799, and was commemorated all through the country by the tolling of bells, funeral ceremonies, orations, sermons, hymns, and dirges, attended by a mournful sense of loss,

seeming to cast a pall over the entire heavens. In Ridgefield, the meeting-house was dressed in black, and we had a discourse pronounced by a Mr. Edmonds, of Newtown. The subject, indeed, engrossed all minds. Lieutenant Smith came every day to our house to talk over the event, and to bring us the proceedings in different parts of the country. Among other papers, he brought us a copy of the Connecticut Courant, then, as now, orthodox in all good things, and according to the taste of the times, duly sprinkled with murders, burglaries, and awful disclosures in general. This gave us the particulars of the rites and ceremonies which took place in Hartford, in commemoration of the Great Man's decease. The paper was bordered with black, which left its indelible ink in my memory. The celebrated hymn,* written for the occasion by Theodore Dwight, sank into my mother's heart—for she had a constitu-

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* Hymn sung at Hartford, Conn., during religious services performed on the occasion of the death of George Washington, Dec. 27th, 1799.

What solemn sounds the ear invade?
What wraps the land in sorrow's shade?
From heaven the awful mandate flies—
The Father of his Country dies.

Let every heart be fill'd with woe,
Let every eye with tears o'erflow;
Each form, oppress'd with deepest gloom,
Be clad in vestments of the tomb.

Behold that venerable band—
The rulers of our mourning land,
With grief proclaim from shore to shore,
Our guide, our Washington's no more.

tional love of things mournful and poetic—and she often repeated it, so that it became a part of the cherished lore of my childhood. This hymn has ever since been to me suggestive of a solemn pathos, mingled with the Ridgefield commemoration of Washington's death—the black drapery of the meeting-house, and the toll of those funeral bells, far, far over the distant hills, now lost and now remembered, as if half a dream and half a reality—yet for these reasons, perhaps, the more suggestive and the more mournful.

I give you these scenes and feelings in some detail, to impress you with the depth and sincerity of this mourning of the American nation, in cities and towns, in villages and hamlets, for the death of Washington. It seems to me wholesome to go back and sympathize with those who had stood in his presence, and catch from them the feeling which should be sacredly cherished in all future time.*

Where shall our country turn its eye?
What help remains beneath the sky?
Our Friend, Protector, Strength, and Trust,
Lies low, and mouldering in the dust.

Almighty God! to Thee we fly;
Before Thy throne above the sky,
In deep prostration humbly bow,
And pour the penitential vow.

Hear, O Most High! our earnest prayer—
Our country take beneath Thy care;
When dangers press and foes draw near,
Let future Washingtons appear.

* Mr. Jefferson and his satellites had begun their attacks upon Washington several years before this period: but beyond the circle of

I have already said that Ridgefield was on the great thoroughfare between Boston and New York, for the day of steamers and railroads had not

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interested partisans, and those to whom virtue is a reproach and glory an offence, they had not yet corrupted or abused the hearts of the people. Some years later, under the presidency of Jefferson and his immediate successor, democracy being in the ascendant, Washington seemed to be fading from the national remembrance. Jefferson was then the master; and even somewhat later, a distinguished Senator said in his place in Congress, that his name and his principles exercised a greater influence over the minds of the people of his native State—Virginia—than even the "Father of his Country." Strange to say, this declaration was made rather in the spirit of triumph than of humiliation.

At the present day the name of Jefferson has lost much of its charm in the United States: democracy itself seems to be taking down its first idol, and placing Andrew Jackson upon the pedestal. Formerly "*Jefferson Democracy*" was the party watchword: now it is "*Jackson Democracy.*" The disclosures of the last thirty years—made by Mr. Jefferson's own correspondence, and that of others—show him to have been very different from what he appeared to be. Had his true character been fully understood, it is doubtful if he would ever have been President of the United States. He was in fact a marvelous compound of good and evil, and it is not strange that it has taken time to comprehend him. He was a man of rare intellectual faculties, but he had one defect —a want of practical controlling faith in God and man—in human truth and human virtue. He did good things, great things: he aided to construct noble institutions, but he undermined them by taking away their foundations. He was, in most respects, the opposite of Washington, and hence his hatred of him was no doubt sincere. We may even suppose that the virulent abuse which he caused to be heaped upon him by hireling editors, was at least partially founded upon conviction. Washington believed in God, and made right the starting-point of all his actions. Next to God, was his country. His principles went before; there was no expediency for him, that was not dictated by rectitude of thought, word, and deed. He was a democrat, but in the English, Puritan, sense—that of depositing power in the hands of the people, and of seeking to guide them only by the truth—by instructing them, elevating them, and exclusively for their own good. Jefferson, on the contrary, was a democrat according to French ideas, and those of the loosest days of the Revolution. Expediency was with him the beginning, the middle, the end of conduct. God seems not to have been in all his thought. He penetrated the masses with his astute intelligence: he had seen in Paris how they could be deluded, stimulated,

dawned. Even the mania for turnpikes, which ere long overspread New England, had not yet arrived. The stage-coaches took four days to make the trip of two hundred miles between the two great cities. In winter, the journey was often protracted to a week, and during the furious snow-storms of those times, to eight or ten days. With such public con-

led, and especially by artful appeals to the baser passions. His party policy seems to have been founded upon a low estimate of human nature in general, and a contempt of the majority in particular. Hence, in attempting to elevate himself to the chief magistracy of the Union, his method was to vilify Washington, and at the same time to pay court to the foibles, prejudices, and low propensities of the million. Demagogism was his system, and never was it more seductively practiced. Over all there was a profound vail of dissimulation; a placid philosophy seemed to sit upon his face, even while he was secretly urging the assassin's blade to the hilt, against the name and fame of him who was "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Simplicity and humility appeared to rule in his bosom, while yet he was steadily paving his way to power. He succeeded, and through the prestige of his position, the original democracy of the United States was cast in his image. He was the father, the founder, the establisher of demagogism in this country, and this unmanly and debasing system of policy has since continued to contaminate and debauch the polities of the land.

There is perhaps some growing disgust at this state of things, but whether we shall ever return to the open, manly, patriotic principles and practice of Washington, is a question which no man can presume to answer. At all events, it seems to me, every one who has influence should sedulously exert it to purify, elevate, and ennoble the public spirit. As one means, let us ever keep in view—let us study and cherish—the character of Washington. Let our politicians even, do this, and while they esteem and follow what was really good in Jefferson, let them beware how they commend his character as an example to those over whom they exercise a controlling influence.

Power is ennobling, when honorably acquired, and patriotically employed; but when obtained by intrigue, and used for selfish ends, it is degrading alike to him who exercises it and those who are subjected to its influence. It is quite time that all good men should combine to put down demagogues and demagogism.

veyances, great people—for even then the world was divided into the great and little, as it is now—traveled in their own carriages.

About this time—it must have been in the summer of 1804—I remember Jerome Bonaparte coming up to Keeler's tavern with a coach and four, attended by his young wife, Miss Patterson, of Baltimore. It was a gay establishment, and the honeymoon sat happily on the tall, sallow stripling, and his young bride. You must remember that Napoleon was then filling the world with his fame: at this moment his feet were on the threshold of the empire. The arrival of his brother in the United States of course made a sensation. His marriage, his movements, all were gossiped over, from Maine to Georgia—not Castine to California—these being the extreme points of the Union. His entrance into Ridgefield produced a flutter of excitement, even there. A crowd gathered around Keeler's tavern, to catch a sight of the strangers, and I among the rest. I had a good, long look at Jerome, who was the chief object of interest, and the image never faded from my recollection.

Half a century later, I was one evening at the Tuileries, amid the flush and the fair of Louis Napoleon's new court. Among them I saw an old man, taller than the mass around—his nose and chin almost meeting in contact, while his toothless gums were "munching the airy meal of dotage and decrepitude." I was irre-

sistibly chained to this object, as if a spectre had risen up through the floor, and stood among the garish throng. My memory traveled back—back among the winding labyrinths of years. Suddenly I found the clue: the stranger was Jerome Bonaparte!

Ah, what a history lay between the past and present—a lapse of nearly fifty years. What a difference between him then and now! Then he was a gay and gallant bridegroom; now, though he had the title of king, he was throneless and scepterless—an Invalid Governor of Invalids—the puppet and pageant of an adventurer, whose power lay in the mere magic of a name.*

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* Jerome Bonaparte, the youngest brother of Napoleon, was born in 1784, and is now (1856) 72 years old. He was educated for the naval service, and in 1801 had the command of the corvette, L'Epervier. In this, the same year, he sailed with the expedition to St. Domingo, commanded by his brother-in-law, Gen. Leclerc. In March following he was sent to France with dispatches, but speedily returned. Hostilities soon after were renewed between France and England, and he sailed on a cruise for some months, finally putting into the port of New York. He was treated with marked attention in the principal cities—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. In the latter he became attached to Elizabeth Patterson—daughter of an eminent merchant there—and distinguished for her beauty and accomplishments. In December, 1803, they were married with due ceremony by John Carroll, the Catholic Bishop of Baltimore, in the presence of several persons of high distinction. He remained about a year in America, and in the spring of 1805 he sailed with his wife for Europe. Napoleon disapproved of the match, and on the arrival of the vessel at the Texel, it was found that orders had been left with the authorities not to permit Jerome's wife to land. She accordingly sailed for England, and taking up her residence in the vicinity of London, gave birth to a son, July 7, 1805. This is the present Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, of Baltimore.

Napoleon, who had now become emperor, and desired to use his broth-

About this time, as I well remember, Oliver Wolcott passed through our village. He arrived at the tavern late on Saturday evening, but he called at our house in the morning, his family being connected

ers for his own purposes, set himself to work to abrogate the marriage, and applied to Pope Pius VII. for this purpose. That prelate, however, refused, inasmuch as the grounds set forth for such a measure were altogether fallacious. Napoleon, however, who was wholly unscrupulous, forced his brother into another match, August 12, 1807, with the princess Frederica Catherina, daughter of the King of Wurtemburg. A few days after he was proclaimed King of Westphalia, which had been created into a kingdom for him. He remained in this position till the overthrow of the Bonapartes in 1814. After this he lived sometimes in Austria, sometimes in Italy, and finally in Paris. He was elected a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1848, and was afterwards made Governor of the Invalides. When Louis Napoleon became emperor in 1852, the Palais Royal was fitted up for him, and he now resides there—his son, Prince Napoleon, and his daughter (formerly married to the Russian Prince Demidoff, but divorced some ten years ago), Princess Mathilde, also having their apartments there.

Jerome Bonaparte has very moderate abilities, and though he is now considered as nominally in the line of succession after the present emperor, his position is only that of a pageant, and even this is derived solely from his being the brother of Napoleon. He is taller by some inches than was the emperor: he, however, has the bronze complexion, and something of the black, stealthy eye, broad brow, the strong, prominent chin, the oval face, and the cold, stony expression, which characterized his renowned brother.

Mrs. Patterson has not followed the career of her weak and unprincipled husband, but has continued to respect her marriage vow. In 1824, being in Dublin, I was informed by Lady Morgan, who had recently seen her in Paris, that the princess Borghese (Napoleon's sister Pauline) had offered to Mrs. Patterson to adopt her son, and make him heir of her immense possessions, if he would come to Italy, and be placed under her care: her answer was, that she preferred to have him a respectable citizen of the United States to any position wealth or power could give him in Europe. She doubtless judged well and wisely, for the Princess Borghese has left behind her a most detestable reputation. Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, of Baltimore, has recently been to Paris, where he has been well received by his father and the emperor; and his son, educated at West Point, is a captain in the French army in the Crimea, and has just been decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honor (1856).

with ours. He was a great man then; for not only are the Wolcotts traditionally and historically a distinguished race in Connecticut, but he had recently been a member of Washington's cabinet. I shall have occasion to speak of him more particularly hereafter. I mention him now only for the purpose of noting his deference to public opinion, characteristic of the eminent men of that day. In the morning he went to church, but immediately after the sermon, he had his horses brought up, and proceeded on his way. He, however, had requested my father to state to his people, at the opening of the afternoon service, that he was traveling on public business, and though he regretted it, he was obliged to continue his journey on the Sabbath. This my father did, but Deacon Olmstead, the Jeremiah of the parish, shook his white locks, and lifted up his voice against such a desecration of the Lord's day. Some years after—as I remember—Lieutenant-governor Treadwell arrived at Keeler's tavern on Saturday evening, and prepared to prosecute his journey the next morning, his daughter, who was with him, being ill. This same Deacon Olmstead called upon him, and said, "Sir, if you thus set the example of a violation of the Sabbath, you must expect to get one vote less at the next election!" The Governor was so much struck by the appearance of the deacon —who was the very image of a patriarch or a prophet —that he deferred his departure till Monday.

Another event of this era I remember, and that is, the celebration of the inauguration of Jefferson, March 4th, A. D. 1801. At this period, the Democratic, or, as it was then called, the Republican party, was not large in Connecticut, yet it was zealous in proportion to its insignificance. The men of wealth, the professional men—those of good position and large influence generally—throughout the State, were almost exclusively federalists. The old platform of religion and politics still stood strong, although agitated and fretted a little by the rising tide of what afterward swelled into a flood, under the captivating name of Toleration. The young Hercules in Ridgefield was in his cradle when Jefferson was made President; but nevertheless, he used his lungs lustily upon the occasion. On the day of the inauguration, the old field-piece, a four-pounder, which had been stuck muzzle down as a horse-post at Keeler's tavern, since the fight of 1777, was dug up, swabbed, and fired off sixteen times, that being the number of States then in the Union. At first the cannon had a somewhat stifled and wheezing tone, but this soon grew louder, and at last the hills re-echoed to the rejoicing of democracy from High Ridge to West Mountain. This might be taken as prophetic, for the voice of democracy, then small and asthmatic, like this old field-piece, soon cleared its throat, and thundered like Sinai, giving law to the land.

My father was a man of calm and liberal temper,

but he was still of the old school, believing in things as they were, and therefore he regarded these demonstrations with a certain degree of horror. But no doubt he felt increased anxiety from the fact that several of the members of his congregation participated in these unseemly orgies. Among these—who would have thought it?—was Jerry Mead, the shoemaker, once itinerant, but now settled down, and keeping his shop. He was one of our near neighbors, and the sound of his lapstone, early and late, was as regular as the tides. His son Sammy was his apprentice, and having a turn for mirth and music, diverted the neighborhood by playing popular airs as he pounded his leather; but Jerry himself was a grave, nay, an austere person, and for this reason, as well as others, was esteemed a respectability. He was a man of plain, strong sense; he went regularly to meeting; sent his children to school, and cut their hair, close and square, according to the creed. It might have been natural enough for his son Sammy, who was given to the earthly vanities of music, dancing, and the like, to have turned out a democrat; but for sour, sober, sensible Jerry—it was quite another thing. What must have been my father's concern to find on the occasion of the aforesaid celebration that Jerry Mead had joined the rabble, and —in a moment of exaltation, it is said—delivered an oration at one of their clubs! This might have been borne—for Jerry was not then a professor—but

conceive his emotion when he heard that Ensign Keeler—the butcher and bell-ringer—who was a half-way convert-member of the church, had touched off the cannon! I am happy to believe that both these persons saw the error of their ways, and died old federalists, as well as church members in full communion —notwithstanding these dark episodes; but for the time, their conduct seemed to shake the very pillars of the state.

It is difficult for the present generation to enter into the feelings of those days. We who are now familiar with democracy, can hardly comprehend the odium attached to it in the age to which I refer, especially in the minds of the sober people of our neighborhood. They not only regarded it as hostile to good government, but as associated with infidelity in religion, radicalism in government, and licentiousness in society. It was considered a sort of monster, born of Tom Paine,* the French Revolution, foreign

* The French Revolution reached its height in 1793, under what was called the Convention. The king perished on the scaffold in January of that year, and the queen and the other members of the royal family soon after. Atheism had taken the place of religion, and government was a wholesale system of murder. All that was good in society seemed to have perished. The Reign of Terror was established under Robespierre and his Jacobin Associates in 1794. About this time the French Minister Genet came to the United States, and under his auspices, *Democratic Clubs*, modeled after those in France, which had enabled the Jacobins to get possession of the government of France, were organized in the United States. Their object was to place our government in the hands of the Jacobins here. This was the beginning of democracy in this country.

The people of America, grateful to France for her assistance in ob-

renegadoes, and the great Father of Evil. Mr. Jefferson, the founder of the party, had been in France, and was supposed by his political opponents to have adopted the atheism and the libertinism of the revolutionists. His personal character and dangerous

taining our Independence, naturally sympathized with that nation in its attempts to establish a free government. They therefore looked upon the Revolution there with favor, amounting at the outset to enthusiasm. When Genet arrived, not fully appreciating the horrors it was perpetrating, many of our people still clung to it with hope, if not with confidence. Designing men saw the use they could make of this feeling, and in order to employ it for the purposes of seizing upon the government, promoted the democratic clubs, and sought to rouse the feelings of the masses into a rage resembling that which was deluging Paris with blood. Some of these leaders were Americans, but the most active were foreigners, many of them adventurers, and men of desperate character. One of the most prominent was Thomas Paine, whose name is now synonymous with infamy. He was a fair representative of democracy at this period.

Fortunately for our country and for mankind, Washington was now President, and by his wisdom, his calmness, and his force of character and influence, conducted the country through a tempest of disorder which threatened to overwhelm it. Thus, a second time was he the Saviour of his country. He naturally became the object of hatred to the democrats, and upon him all the vials of their wrath were poured. Jefferson, as is now known, encouraged, employed, and paid some of these defamers. It is true that at this time he did not adopt the term democrat—nor do we believe he shared its spirit to the full extent: he preferred the term republican, as did his followers, at the outset. Afterward they adopted the term democrat, in which they now rejoice. Of the democratic party, Jefferson was, however, the efficient promoter at the beginning, and may be considered its father and its founder. From these facts, it will be seen that this dread of him, on the part of the staid, conservative, Puritan people of New England, was not without good foundation. See *Hildreth's History of the United States*, second series, vol. i. pp. 424 and 455; also *Griswold's Republican Court*, p. 290.

As Jefferson was the leader of the democratic party, so Washington was the head of the federalists. Since that period the terms *democrat* and *federalist* have undergone many changes of signification, and have been used for various purposes. *Democracy* is still the watchword of party, but the term *federalism* is merely historical, that of *whig* having been adopted by the conservatives.

political proclivities, as I have said, were not then well understood. The greatest fear of him, at this time, was as to his moral, religious, and social influence. It was supposed that his worshipers could not be better than their idol, and it must be confessed that the democracy of New England in its beginning raked up and absorbed the chaff of society. It is due to the truth of history to state that men of blemished reputations, tipplers, persons of irregular tempers, odd people, those who were constitutionally upsetters,* de-

* I have just stated the historical origin of the two great parties in the United States. These, though taking their rise from passing events, had a deeper root. In all countries, where there is liberty of speech and print, there will be two parties – the *Conservatives* and the *Radicals*. These differences arise mainly from the constitutions of men and their varying conditions in society. Some are born *Destructives* and some *Constructives*. The former constitute the nucleus of the radical party. They are without property, and therefore make war on property, and those who possess it. One of this class, a born radical, usually passes his whole life in this condition, for in his nature he is opposed to accumulation. He is characterized by the parable of the rolling-stone which gathers no moss. The mass of the radical party in all countries is made up of such persons. The born constructive, on the contrary, is for law and order by instinct as well as reflection. He is industrious, frugal, acquisitive: he accumulates property, he constructs a fortune, and becomes in all things conservative.

From these two sources, the great parties in the United States derive their chief recruits. Most men of intelligence and reflection, however, are conservatives in their convictions, because it is by the maintenance of order alone that life and liberty can be preserved. But unhappily intelligent men are often destitute of principle; they sometimes desire to wield political power, and as this is frequently in the hands of the radicals, they play the demagogue, and flatter the masses, to obtain their votes. Ex-president John Adams said, with great truth, that when a man, born in the circle of aristocracy, undertakes to play the demagogue, he generally does it with more art and success than any other person. When the demagogue has acquired power—when he has attained the object of his ambition—he generally takes off the mask, and as he can now afford it he is henceforth a conservative. This is the history of

structives, comeouters, flocked spontaneously, as if by a kind of instinct, to the banner of democracy, about the period of Jefferson's first election, and constituted, for a considerable period afterward, the staple of the party. In due time and when they had increased in numbers, they gradually acquired respectable leaders. General King, who became the head of the party in Ridgefield, was a high-minded, intelligent man; and so it happened in other places. But still, the mass in the outset were such as I have described.

It may be conjectured, then, with what concern a sincere and earnest pastor—like my father—saw some

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most demagogues in this country. Hence it is that demagogism has not had the fatal consequences that might have been anticipated. It has indeed defiled our politics, it has degraded our manners, and should be spurned by every manly bosom; but yet it has stopped short of the destruction of our government and our institutions.

Demagogism has prevailed to such an extent among us, that a very large share of the political offices are now held by demagogues. It was otherwise at the outset of our government. The people then cast about and selected their best men: now party managers take the matter into their own hands, and often select the worst men for officers, as none but persons who can be bought and sold would answer their purpose. Thus, office has sunk in respectability. We have no longer Washingtons, Ellsworths, Shermans—men of honor to the heart's core—at the head of affairs, and stamping our manners and our institutions with virtue and dignity. Office is so low that our first-class men shun it. We have too many inferior men in high places—who, in degrading their stations, degrade the country. This is wrong: it is a sin against reason, common sense, patriotism, and prudence. Nevertheless, there is, despite these adverse circumstances, spread over this vast country a sober, solid, and virtuous majority—some in one party and some in another—who will not permit these evils to *destroy* our institutions. Whoever may rule, there is and will be a preponderance of conservatism, and this, we trust, will save us. Democracy may rave—radicalism may foam at the mouth, and these may get the votes and appropriate the spoils, but still law and order will prevail, through the supremacy of reason, rectitude, and religion.

of the members of his own flock, including others whom he hoped to gather into the fold, kneeling down to this Moloch of democracy. Time passed on, and less than twenty years after, federalism was overturned, and democracy triumphed in Connecticut. The old time-honored parchment of Charles II., supposed to be a sort of eleventh commandment, and firm as Plymouth Rock, passed away, like a scroll, and a new constitution was established. What bodings, what anxieties, were experienced during this long agony of Conservatism! And yet society survived. The old landmarks, though shaken, still remained, and some of them even derived confidence, if not firmness, from the agitation. Nay, strange to say, in the succeeding generation, democracy cast its slough, put on clean linen, and affected respectability. Many of the sons of the democrats of 1800, and conceived in its image, were the leaders of federalism in 1825. Indeed, the word democracy, which was first used as synonymous with Jacobinism, has essentially changed its signification, and now means little more than the progressive party, in opposition to the conservative party.

Such is the cycle of politics, such are the oscillations of progress and conservatism, which, in point of fact, regulate the great march of society, and spur it on to constant advances in civilization. These two forces, if not indispensable to liberty, are always attendant upon it; one is centripetal, the other centrifugal, and are always in conflict and contending

against each other. The domination of either would doubtless lead to abuses; but the spirit of both, duly tempered, combines to work out the good of all. One thing is settled in this country—though democracy may seem to rule; though it may carry the elections and engross the offices, it is still obliged to bow to conservatism, which insists upon the supremacy of law and order. Democracy may be a good ladder on which to climb into power, but it is then generally thrown down, with contempt, by those who have accomplished their object, and have no further use for it.

I must here note, in due chronological order, an event which caused no little public emotion. One of the first, and perhaps the most conspicuous victim of proscription in Jefferson's time, was my uncle, Elizur Goodrich, Collector of the port of New Haven—at that time an office of some importance, as New Haven had then a large West India trade. The story is thus told by the historian:

"One of the most noticeable of these cases was the removal of Elizur Goodrich, lately a representative in Congress from Connecticut, who had resigned his seat to accept the office of Collector of New Haven. In his place was appointed Samuel Bishop, a respectable old man of seventy-seven, but so nearly blind, that he could hardly write his name, and with no particular qualifications for the office, or claim to it, except being the father of one Abraham Bishop, a young democrat, a lawyer without practice, for whom the appointment was originally intended. The claims of the younger Bishop consisted in two political orations, which he had recently delivered; one of them by a sort of surprise before a literary society of Yale College, an occa-

sion upon which all the dignitaries of the State were collected. This was a vehement and flippant, but excessively shallow declamation, yet suited to alarm the popular mind, the burden of it being that by commercial, military, clerical, and legal delusions, a monarchy* and aristocracy were just on the point of being saddled on the country. To this oration, already in print before it had been delivered, and which was at once distributed as an electioneering document—the choice of presidential electors being then about to take place—Noah Webster had immediately published a cutting reply, entitled 'A Rod for the Fool's Back.' The younger Bishop's second oration, delivered at a festival to celebrate the republican triumph, was a parallel, drawn at great length, between Jefferson and Jesus Christ—'The illustrious chief who, once insulted, now presides over the Union, and Him who, once insulted, now presides over the universe.'"—*Hildreth's History of the United States*, vol. ii. p. 429.

For several reasons, this event caused great excitement. The election of Jefferson had been made by the House of Representatives, after a severe conflict, which lasted several weeks. The choice was finally effected by Mr. Jefferson's giving pledges to James A. Bayard, of Delaware, and some other federal members, who consequently withdrew their opposition. He agreed, if elected, to follow certain principles of conduct, and stipulated, that while, of course, he would fill

* The great alarm-cry of the leaders of democracy at this period was, that the federalists sympathized with England and hated France; that hence it was clear they were monarchists at heart, and designed to overthrow our republic, and establish a monarchy in its place. Washington was openly and repeatedly charged as a traitor, entertaining these views and purposes. It is now known, as already intimated, that Jefferson encouraged and even paid some of the editors who made these charges. See *Hildreth*, vol. ii. p. 454, &c. Second Series.

important confidential offices—as those of the secretaries of state and treasury, foreign ministers, &c., with persons of his own political creed—no removals from inferior stations, such as "*collectors of ports*," &c., including offices of mere detail, generally, should take place on the ground of opinion. The removal above alluded to, being in direct violation of this pledge, caused great indignation.

Hitherto removals of even inferior officers had never been made because their opinions did not suit the President, and hence this instance created general surprise as well as alarm, especially when the circumstances and the motives for the measure were taken into consideration. The principal citizens of New Haven, particularly the merchants, felt this as a severe blow, and accordingly addressed to the President a respectful but earnest remonstrance against the change that had taken place. Mr. Jefferson replied in a letter, which has become celebrated, as it not only displayed, in a remarkable degree, his rhetorical skill and political tact, but it may be said to have settled, as a matter of principle in our government, that it is within the province of the President to make removals from office on mere party grounds. It is true that this was not largely practiced by Mr. Jefferson, for public opinion seemed not then to be prepared for it; but the example he set, and the skill he manifested in defending this fatal doctrine, afterward resulted in an open declaration

by his party, that "*to the victors belong the spoils*"—and hence the whole arena of politics has been degraded by infusing into it the selfishness and violence which characterize a battle, where "beauty and booty" is the watchword.

I may not find a better place than this for an anecdote, which shows the tendency of political storms, like those of nature—by sea and by land—to revolve in a circle. This Abraham Bishop, just mentioned, the son of Collector Bishop, grew up a democrat, and became an able and skillful stump orator. He is said to have originated the electioneering apothegm—"one doubt loses ten votes!" For several years he was the Boanerges of the party in Connecticut, and always went on a circuit to stir up the democracy just previous to the elections. At length he was appointed Collector of the port of New Haven, with some five thousand dollars a year. Well: again, when an election was approaching, he was desired by the leaders of the party to go forth and wake up the democracy by a round of speeches. "No, no," said the Collector with $5000 a year: "I think we have quite democracy enough, now!" A few years later, Mr. Bishop was in the ranks of the whigs or federalists, and died much respected as a man of conservative politics, morals, and manners!

In short, my dear C...., though I respect a quiet, conscientious democrat, as much as I do any other man—still, when I see a noisy politician crying out, "The

democracy! ho, the democracy!"—I consider it pretty certain—judging from long experience and observation—that, according to the proverb, "Somebody has an axe to grind," and desires to wheedle his dupes into turning the grindstone, gratis.

LETTER X.

How People traveled Fifty Years ago—Timothy Pickering—Manners along the Road—Jefferson and Shoe-strings—Mr. Priest and Mr. Democrat—Barbers at Washington—James Madison and the Queue—Winter and Sleighing—Comfortable Meeting-houses—The Stove Party and the Anti-Stove Party—The first Chaise built in Ridgefield—The Beginning of the Carriage Manufacture there.

My dear C******

I have incidentally remarked that about the beginning of the present century great people traveled, in our quarter, not in cars, or steamers, or even in stage coaches, to any considerable extent, but in their own carriages. The principal travel was on horseback. Many of the members of Congress came to Washington in this way. I have a dim recollection of seeing one day, when I was trudging along to school, a tall, pale, gaunt man, approaching on horseback with his plump saddlebags behind him. I looked at him keenly, and made my obeisance as in duty bound. He lifted his hat, and bowed in return. By a quick instinct, I set him down as a man of mark. In the

evening, Lieutenant Smith came to our house and told us that Timothy Pickering had passed through the town! He had seen him and talked with him, and was vastly distended with the portentous news thereby acquired—including the rise and fall of empires for ages to come—and all of which he duly unfolded to our family circle.

Before I proceed, let me note, in passing, a point of manners then universal, but which has now nearly faded away. When travelers met with people on the highway, both saluted one another with a certain dignified and formal courtesy. All children were regularly taught at school to "make their manners" to strangers; the boys to bow and the girls to courtesy. It was something different from the frank, familiar "How are you, stranger?" of the Far West; something different from the "*bon jour, serviteur*," of the Alps. These no doubt arise from the natural sociability of man, and are stimulated into a fashion and a tradition by the sparseness of the population, for sociability is greatly promoted by isolation. Our salute was more measured and formal, respect to age and authority being evidently an element of this homage, which was sedulously taught to the young. Its origin I cannot tell; perhaps it came from England with the Puritans, and was a vestige of that kindly ceremony which always marks the intercourse of the upper and lower classes in a country where the patrician and plebeian are estab-

lished by law and public sentiment. Perhaps it bespoke also something of that reign of authority, which then regulated society in the affairs of Church and State.

But however this may be, it is certain that for children to salute travelers was, in my early days, as well a duty as a decency. A child who did not "make his manners" to a stranger on the high-road, was deemed a low fellow; a stranger who refused to acknowledge this civility was esteemed a *sans culotte*—perhaps a favorer of Jacobinism. It may be remarked that men of the highest rank in those days were particular in these attentions to children; indeed, I may say that the emphasis of a stranger's courtesy was generally the measure of his station. I can testify that in my own case, the effect of this was to impress me strongly with the amiability of rank which thus condescended to notice a child; at the same time, it encouraged children, in some sort, to imitate high and honorable examples.

The decadence of this good old highway politeness in Connecticut, began soon after the period of which I now write. Remember that this was long before the era of railroads and lightning telegraphs. Of course it would be idle for boys and girls now-a-days to undertake to bow and courtesy to locomotives: in such a process they would run the risk of wringing their necks and tripping up their heels. But forty years ago people plodded along at the rate of two

to four miles the hour. Everybody had time then to be polite. It is all changed: aspiring young America was then slow, as it is fast now. Since every thing goes by steam and electricity, tall walking and tall talking are the vogue. It is easy to comprehend how this comes about; but it was even before the advent of this age of agony, that the good old country custom on the part of the rising generation, to salute strangers along the road, had waned. It first subsided into a vulgar nod, half ashamed and half impudent, and then, like the pendulum of a dying clock, totally ceased.

Thus passed away the age of politeness. For some reason or other, it seems to have gone down with old Hartford Convention Federalism. The change in manners had no doubt been silently going on for some time; but it was not distinctly visible to common eyes till the establishment of the new constitution. Powder and queues, cocked-hats and broad-brims, white-top boots, breeches, and shoe-buckles—signs and symbols of a generation, a few examples of which still lingered among us—finally departed with the Charter of Charles II., while with the new constitution of 1818, short hair, pantaloons, and round hats with narrow brims, became the established costume of men of all classes.

Jefferson was, or affected to be, very simple in his taste, dress, and manners. He wore pantaloons, instead of breeches, and adopted leather shoe-strings in

place of buckles. These and other similar things were praised by his admirers as signs of his democracy: a certain coarseness of manners, supposed to be encouraged by the leaders, passed to the led. Rudeness and irreverence were at length deemed democratic, if not democracy.* An anecdote, which is strictly historical, will illustrate this.

About this time, there was in the eastern part of Connecticut a clergyman by the name of Cleveland, who was noted for his wit. One summer day, as he was riding along, he came to a brook. Here he paused to let his horse drink. Just then, a stranger rode into the stream from the opposite direction, and his horse began to drink also. The animals approached, as is their wont under such circumstances, and thus brought the two men face to face.

"How are you, priest?" said the stranger.

"How are you, democrat?" said the parson.

"How do you know I am a democrat?" said one.

"How do you know I am a priest?" said the other.

"I know you to be a priest by your dress," said the stranger.

"I know you to be a democrat by your address," said the parson.

* Jefferson carried his plebeianism so far as to put an end to the social gatherings of the people at the President's house, called *levees*. Madison, who was a better—that is, a wiser and truer—democrat, saw that these meetings tended at once to elevation of manners and equalization of social position, and restored them. Mrs. Madison's levees were not less brilliant than those of lady Washington, though they were less dignified and refined.

"How are you, Priest?" "How are you, Democrat?" Vol. 1, p. 130

There is an anecdote of a somewhat later date, which illustrates the same point. In Washington's time, the manners of the country, among the leading classes, assumed a good deal of stateliness, and this was perpetuated by the example of this great man—great alike from his office, his character, and his history. This was made the foundation of the charge against him—so basely urged—that he was at heart a monarchist. It was but natural that Jefferson should appear to be, in all things, his opposite. Under his administration, as I have just said, a great change was effected in external manners. As was reasonable, the democrats followed the example of their leader, now chief magistrate of the nation, while among the old federalists there still lingered vestiges of the waning costume of other days.

A very keen observer, then and long afterward a senator of the United States, once told me that at this period, all the barbers of Washington were federalists, and he imputed it to the fact that the leaders of that party in Congress wore powder and long queues, and of course had them dressed every day by the barber. The democrats, on the contrary, wore short hair, or, at least, small queues, tied up carelessly with a ribbon, and therefore gave little encouragement to the tonsorial art. One day, as the narrator told me, while he was being shaved by the leading barber of the city—who was of course a federalist—the latter suddenly and vehemently burst out against the

nomination of Madison for the presidency by the democratic party, which had that morning been announced.

"Dear me!" said the barber, "surely this country is doomed to disgrace and shame. What Presidents we might have, sir! Just look at Daggett of Connecticut and Stockton of New Jersey! What queues they have got, sir—as big as your wrist, and powdered every day, sir, like real gentlemen as they are. Such men, sir, would confer dignity upon the chief magistracy; but this little Jim Madison, with a queue no bigger than a pipe-stem! Sir, it is enough to make a man forswear his country!"

But I must return to locomotion—not railing but wheeling. In Ridgefield, in the year 1800, there was but a single chaise, and that belonged to Colonel Bradley, one of the principal citizens of the place. It was without a top, and had a pair of wide-spreading, asinine ears. That multitudinous generation of traveling vehicles, so universal and so convenient now—such as top-wagons, four-wheeled chaises, tilburies, dearborns, &c., was totally unknown. Even if these things had been invented, the roads would scarcely have permitted the use of them. Physicians who had occasion to go from town to town, went on horseback; all clergymen, except perhaps Bishop Seabury, who rode in a coach, traveled in the same way. My father's people, who lived at a distance, came to church on horseback—their

wives and daughters being seated on pillions behind them. In a few cases—as in spring-time, when the mud had no soundings—the farm wagon was used for transporting the family.

In winter it was otherwise, for we had three or four months of sleighing. Then the whole country was a railroad, and gay times we had. Oh! those beau tiful winters, which would drive me shivering to the fireside now: what vivid delight have I had in your slidings and skatings, your sleddings and sleigh ings! One thing strikes me now with wonder, and that is, the general indifference, in those days, to the intensity of winter. No doubt, as I have said before, the climate was then more severe; but be that as it may, people seemed to suffer less from it than at the present day. Nobody thought of staying at home from church because of the extremity of the weather. We had no thermometers, it is true, to frighten us with the revelation that it was twenty-five degrees below zero. The habits of the people were simple and hardy, and there were few defences against the assaults of the seasons. The houses were not tight; we had no stoves, no Lehigh or Lackawanna coal; yet we lived, and comfortably too; nay, we even changed burly winter into a season of enjoyment.

Let me tell you a story, by the way, upon the meeting-houses of those days. They were of wood, and slenderly built, of course admitting somewhat freely the blasts of the seasons. In the severe win-

ter days, we only mitigated the temperature by foot-stoves; but these were deemed effeminate luxuries, suited to women and children. What would have been thought of Deacon Olmstead and Granther Baldwin, had they yielded to the weakness of a foot-stove!

The age of comfortable meeting-houses and churches, in county towns, was subsequent to this, some twenty or thirty years. All improvement is gradual, and frequently advances only by conflict with prejudice, and victory over opposition. In a certain county town within my knowledge, the introduction of stoves into the meeting-house, about the year 1830, threatened to overturn society. The incident may be worth detailing, for trifles often throw light upon important subjects.

In this case, the metropolis, which we will call H..., had adopted stoves in the churches, and naturally enough some people of the neighboring town of E.... set about introducing this custom into the meeting-house in their own village. Now, the two master-spirits of society—the Demon of Progress and the Angel of Conservatism—somehow or other had got into the place, and as soon as this reform was suggested, they began to wrestle with the people, until at last the church and society were divided into two violent factions—the Stove Party and the Anti-stove Party. At the head of the first was Mrs. Deacon K.... and at the head of the latter was Mrs. Deacon P..... The battle raged portentously, very much

like the renowned tempest in a teapot. Society was indeed lashed into a foam. The minister, between the contending factions, scarcely dared to say his soul was his own. He could scarcely find a text from "Genesis to Jude," that might not commit him on one side or the other. The strife—of course—ran into politics, and the representative to the assembly got in by a happy knack at dodging the question in such wise as to be claimed by both parties.

Finally, the progressionists prevailed—the stove party triumphed, and the stoves were accordingly installed. Great was the humiliation of the anti-stoveites; nevertheless, they concluded to be submissive to the dispensations of Providence. On the Sabbath succeeding the installation of the stoves, Mrs. Deacon P...., instead of staying away, did as she ought, and went to church. As she moved up the broad aisle, it was remarked that she looked pale but calm, as a martyr should, conscious of injury, yet struggling to forgive. Nevertheless, when the minister named his text—Romans xii. 20—and spoke about heaping coals of fire on the head—she slid from her seat, and subsided gently upon the floor. The train of ideas suggested was, in fact, too much for her heated brain and shattered nerves. Suddenly there was a rush to the pew, and the fainting lady was taken out. When she came to the air, she slightly revived.

"Pray what is the matter?" said Mrs. Deacon

K...., who bent over her, holding a smelling-bottle to her nose.

"Oh, it is the heat of those awful stoves," said Mrs. Deacon P....

"No, no, my dear," said Mrs. Deacon K....; "that can't be: it's a warm day, you know, and there's no fire in them."

"No fire in the stoves?" said Mrs. Deacon P....

"Not a particle," said Mrs. Deacon K....

"Well, I feel better now," said the poor lady; and so bidding her friends good-by, she went home, in a manner suited to the occasion.

I have said that in the year 1800 there was but a single chaise in Ridgefield, and this was brought, I believe, from New Haven. There was not, I imagine, a coach, or any kind of pleasure vehicle—that crazy old chaise excepted—in the county of Fairfield, out of the two half-shire towns. Such things, indeed, were known at New York, Boston, and Philadelphia—for already the government had laid a tax upon pleasure conveyances; but they were comparatively few in number, and were mostly imported. In 1798, there was but one public hack in New Haven, and but one coach; the latter belonging to Pierpoint Edwards, being a large four-wheeled vehicle, for two persons, called a chariot. In the smaller towns, there were no pleasure vehicles in use throughout New England. What an Old Fogy the world was then!

About that time, there came to our village a man

by the name of Jesse J. Skellinger, an Englishman, and chaisemaker by trade. My father engaged him to build him a chaise. A bench was set up in our barn, and certain trees of oak and ash were cut in our neighboring woods. These were sawed and seasoned, and shaped into wheels and shafts. Thomas Hawley, half blacksmith and half wheelwright, was duly initiated, and he cunningly wrought the iron necessary for the work. In five months the chaise was finished, with a standing top—greatly to the admiration of our family. What a gaze was there, my countrymen, as this vehicle went through Ridgefield-street upon its first expedition!

This was the beginning of the chaise manufactory in Ridgefield, which has since been a source of large revenue to the town. Skellinger was engaged by Elijah Hawley, who had formerly done something as a wagon-builder, and thus in due time an establishment was founded, which for many years was noted for the beauty and excellence of its pleasure vehicles.

The origin of local and special kinds of industry is often hidden in mystery. It would be difficult to tell who began the manufactory of needles at Redditch, ribbons at St. Etienne, or watches at Geneva; but it is certain that our chaise, built in our barn, was the commencement of the Ridgefield carriage manufactory, which greatly flourished for a time, and gave rise to other branches of mechanical industry, which still contribute to the prosperity of the place.

LETTER XI.

Up-town and Down-town—East End and West End—Master Stebbins—A Model Schoolmaster—The School-house—Administration of the School—Zeek Sanford—School-books—Arithmetic—History—Grammar—Anecdote of G.... H.....—Country Schools of New England in these Days—Master Stebbins's Scholars.

My dear C******

Ridgefield, as well as most other places, had its Up-town and Down-town — terms which have not unfrequently been the occasion of serious divisions in the affairs of Church and State. In London this distinction takes the name of West End and the City. The French philosophers say that every great capital has similar divisions—West End being always the residence of the aristocracy and East End of the *canaille*. They affirm that it is not only so in fact as to London, Paris, Vienna, and other capitals of the present day, but that it was so in Rome, Athens, Babylon, and Nineveh of old. This they explain by a general law, pervading all countries and all ages, which establishes a current of air from west to east, thus ventilating and purifying the one, and charging the other with the fuliginous vapors of a crowded population. Hence, they say that not only cities must have their West End and East End, but that houses should be built on the same principle—the parlor to the west and the kitchen to the east. This

is surely laying deep the foundations of the patrician and plebeian divisions of society.

Whether our great American cities furnish any support to this ingenious theory, I leave to be determined by the philosophers. I shall only venture to remark that Ridgefield, being a village, had a right to follow its own whim, and therefore West Lane, instead of being the aristocratic end of the place, was really rather the low end. It constituted in fact what was called *Down-town*, in distinction from the more eastern and northern section, called *Up-town*. In this latter portion, and about the middle of the main street, was the Up-town school, the leading seminary of the village, for at this period it had not arrived at the honors of an academy. At the age of ten years I was sent here, the institution being then, and many years after, under the charge of Master Stebbins. He was a man with a conciliating stoop in the shoulders, a long body, short legs, and a swaying walk. He was, at this period, some fifty years old, his hair being thin and silvery, and always falling in well-combed rolls, over his coat-collar. His eye was blue, and his dress invariably of the same color. Breeches and knee-buckles, blue-mixed stockings, and shoes with bright buckles, seemed as much a part of the man as his head and shoulders. On the whole, his appearance was that of the middle-class gentleman of the olden time, and he was in fact what he seemed.

This seminary of learning for the rising aristocracy of Ridgefield was a wooden edifice, thirty by twenty feet, covered with brown clapboards, and except an entry, consisted of a single room. Around, and against the walls ran a continuous line of seats, fronted by a continuous writing-desk. Beneath, were depositories for books and writing materials. The center was occupied by slab seats, similar to those of West Lane. The larger scholars were ranged on the outer sides, at the desks; the smaller fry of a-b-c-darians were seated in the center. The master was enshrined on the east side of the room, contrary, be it remembered, to the law of the French savans, which places dominion invariably in the west. Regular as the sun, Master Stebbins was in his seat at nine o'clock, and the performances of the school began.

According to the Catechism—which, by the way, we learned and recited on Saturday—the chief end of man was to glorify God and keep his commandments: according to the routine of this school, one would have thought it to be reading, writing, and arithmetic, to which we may add spelling. From morning to night, in all weathers, through every season of the year, these exercises were carried on with the energy, patience, and perseverance of a manufactory.

Master Stebbins respected his calling: his heart was in his work; and so, what he pretended to teach, he taught well. When I entered the school, I found

that a huge stride had been achieved in the march of mind since I had left West Lane. Webster's Spelling-book had taken the place of Dilworth, which was a great improvement. The drill in spelling was very thorough, and applied every day to the whole school. I imagine that the exercises might have been amusing to a stranger, especially as one scholar would sometimes go off in a voice as grum as that of a bull-frog, while another would follow in tones as fine and piping as a peet-weet. The blunders, too, were often ineffably ludicrous; even we children would sometimes have tittered, had not such an enormity been certain to have brought out the birch. As to rewards and punishments, the system was this: whoever missed went down; so that perfection mounted to the top. Here was the beginning of the up and down of life.

Reading was performed in classes, which generally plodded on without a hint from the master. Nevertheless, when Zeek Sanford*—who was said to have a streak of lightning in him—in his haste to be smart,

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* Ezekiel Sanford was a son of Colonel Benjamin Sanford, of Reading. The latter married a daughter of Col. David Olmstead, of Ridgefield, a man of great respectability: after residing a few years here, he removed to Onondaga county, New York, and thence to Philadelphia, and afterward to Germantown, where he died about thirty years ago.

Ezekiel, our schoolmate, was a lad of great spirit and excellent capacity. He was educated at Yale College, and was there noted as a promising writer. He subsequently became editor of the *Eclectic Magazine* at Philadelphia, and in 1819, published a *History of the United States before the Revolution, with some account of the Aborigines.* Having studied law, he removed to Columbia, South Carolina, where he died about the year 1825.

read the 37th verse of the 2d chapter of the Acts—"Now when they heard this, they were *pickled* in their heart"—the birch stick on Master Stebbins's table seemed to quiver and peel at the little end, as if to give warning of the wrath to come. When Orry Keeler—Orry was a girl, you know, and not a boy—drawled out in spelling: k—o—n, *kon*, s—h—u—n—t—s, *shunts*, konshunts—the bristles in the master's eyebrows fidgeted like Aunt Delight's knitting-needles. Occasionally, when the reading was insupportably bad, he took a book and read himself, as an example.

We were taught arithmetic in Daboll, then a new book, and which, being adapted to our measures of length, weight, and currency, was a prodigious leap over the head of poor old Dilworth, whose rules and examples were modeled upon English customs. In consequence of the general use of Dilworth in our schools, for perhaps a century—pounds, shillings, and pence were classical, and dollars and cents vulgar, for several succeeding generations. "I would not give a penny for it," was genteel; "I would not give a cent for it," was plebeian. We have not yet got over this: we sometimes say *red cent* in familiar parlance, but it can hardly be put in print without offense.

Master Stebbins was a great man with a slate and pencil, and I have an idea that we were a generation after his own heart. We certainly achieved wonders according to our own conceptions, some of us going

even beyond the Rule of Three, and making forays into the mysterious region of Vulgar Fractions. Several daring geniuses actually entered and took possession.

But after all, penmanship was Master Stebbins's great accomplishment. He had no magniloquent system; no pompous lessons upon single lines and bifid lines, and the like. The revelations of inspired copy-book makers had not then been vouchsafed to man. He could not cut an American eagle with a single flourish of a goose-quill. He was guided by good taste and native instinct, and wrote a smooth round hand, like copper-plate. His lessons from A to &, all written by himself, consisted of pithy proverbs and useful moral lessons. On every page of our writing-books he wrote the first line himself. The effect was what might have been expected—with such models, patiently enforced, nearly all became good writers.

Beyond these simple elements, the Up-town school made few pretensions. When I was there, two Webster's Grammars and one or two Dwight's Geographies were in use. The latter was without maps or illustrations, and was in fact little more than an expanded table of contents, taken from Morse's Universal Geography—the mammoth monument of American learning and genius of that age and generation. The grammar was a clever book; but I have an idea that neither Master Stebbins nor his pupils ever fathomed its

depths. They floundered about in it, as if in a quagmire, and after some time came out pretty nearly where they went in, though perhaps a little obfuscated by the dim and dusky atmosphere of these labyrinths.

The fact undoubtedly is, that the art of teaching, as now understood, beyond the simplest elements, was neither known nor deemed necessary in our country schools in their day of small things. Repetition, drilling, line upon line, and precept upon precept, with here and there a little of the birch—constituted the entire system.

James G. Carter* had not then begun the series of publications, which laid the foundation of the great movement in school education, which afterward pervaded New England. "Bring up a child in the way in which he should go," was the principle; the practice regarded this way as straight and narrow — somewhat like a gun-barrel—and the scholar as a bullet, who was to go ahead, whether he had to encounter a pine board or an oak knot. In climbing up the steep ascent to knowledge, he was expected to rely upon his own genius; a kindly, helping hand along the rough and dubious passages, was rarely extended to him. "Do this!" said the master, with his eye bent on the ferule, and generally the pupil did it, if the matter related to the simpler school

* See note V., p. 540.

exercises. But when you came to grammar—that was quite another thing.

Let me here repeat an anecdote, which I have indeed told before, but which I had from the lips of its hero, G... H..., a clergyman of some note thirty years ago, and which well illustrates this part of my story. At a village school, not many miles from Ridgefield, he was put into Webster's Grammar. Here he read, "*A noun is the name of a thing—as horse, hair, justice.*" Now, in his innocence, he read it thus: "*A noun is the name of a thing—as horse-hair justice.*"

"What then," said he, ruminating deeply, "is a noun? But first I must find out what a horse-hair justice is."

Upon this he meditated for some days, but still he was as far as ever from the solution. Now his father was a man of authority in those parts, and moreover he was a justice of the peace. Withal, he was of respectable ancestry, and so there had descended to him a somewhat stately high-backed settee, covered with horse-hair. One day, as the youth came from school, pondering upon the great grammatical problem, he entered the front door of the house, and there he saw before him, his father, officiating in his legal capacity, and seated upon the old horse-hair settee. "I have found it!" said the boy to himself, as greatly delighted as was Archimedes when he exclaimed *Eureka*—"my father is a horse-hair justice, and therefore a noun!"

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the world got on remarkably well in spite of this narrowness of the country schools. The elements of an English education were pretty well taught throughout the village seminaries of Connecticut, and I may add, of New England. The teachers were heartily devoted to their profession: they respected their calling, and were respected and encouraged by the community. They had this merit, that while they attempted but little, that, at least, was thoroughly performed.

As to the country at large, it was a day of quiet, though earnest action: Franklin's spirit was the great "schoolmaster abroad"—teaching industry, perseverance, frugality, and thrift, as the end and aim of ambition. The education of youth was suited to what was expected of them. With the simple lessons of the country schools, they moved the world immediately around them. Though I can recollect only a single case—that already alluded to of Ezekiel Sanford—in which one of Master Stebbins's scholars attained any degree of literary distinction, still, quite a number of them, with no school learning beyond what he gave them, rose to a certain degree of eminence. His three sons obtained situations in New York as accountants, and became distinguished in their career. At one period there were three graduates of his school, who were cashiers of banks in that city. My mind adverts now with great satisfac-

tion to several names among the wealthy, honorable, and still active merchants of the great metropolis, who were my fellow-students of the Up-town school, and who there began and completed their education. I will venture to name another—Rufus H. King, of Albany, who was my competitor in every study, and my friend in every play. May I not be permitted to add that he has ever been, and still is, my friend? As a man, he is precisely what he promised to be as Master Stebbins's pupil. I know he will excuse me for thus speaking of him in behalf of our revered old schoolmaster, to whose character and memory I can inscribe no more worthy monument than this reference to his pupils.

LETTER XII.

Horsemanship—Bige's Adventures—A Dead Shot—A Race—Academical Honors—Charles Chatterbox—My Father's School—My Exercises in Latin—Tityre tu patulæ, etc.—Rambles—Literary Aspirations—My Mother—Family Worship—Standing and Kneeling at Prayer—Anecdotes—Our Philistine Temple.

My dear C******

Permit me a few more details as to my school-day recollections. I went steadily to the Up-town school for three winters, being occupied during the summers upon the farm, and in various minor duties.

I was a great deal on horseback, often carrying messages to the neighboring towns of Reading, Wilton, Weston, and Lower Salem, for then the post-routes were few, and the mails, which were weekly, crept like snails over hill and valley. I became a bold rider at an early age; before I was eight years old, I frequently ventured to put a horse to his speed, and that, too, without a saddle. A person who has never tried it, can hardly conceive of the wild delight of riding a swift horse—when he lays down his ears, tosses his tail in air, and stretches himself out in a full race. The change which the creature undergoes, in passing from an ordinary gait into a run, is felt by the rider to be a kind of sudden inspiration, which triumphs like wings over the dull, dragging laws of gravitation. The intense energy of the beast's movements, the rush of the air, the swimming backward of lands, houses, and trees, with the clattering thunder of the hoofs—all convey to the rider a fierce ecstasy, which, perhaps, nothing else can give. About this period, however, I received a lesson, which lasted me a lifetime.

You must know that Deacon Benedict, one of our neighbors, had a fellow living with him, named Abijah. He was an adventurous youth, and more than once led me into tribulation. I remember that on one occasion I went with him to shoot a dog that was said to worry the deacon's sheep. It was night, and dark as Egypt, but Bige said he could see the

creature, close to the cow-house, back of the barn. He banged away, and then jumped over the fence, to pick up the game. After a time he came back, but said not a word. Next morning it was found that he had shot the brindled cow; mistaking a white spot in her forehead for the dog, he had taken deadly aim, and put the whole charge into her pate. Fortunately her skull was thick and the shot small, so the honest creature was only a little cracked. Bige, however, was terribly scolded by the deacon, who was a justice of the peace, and had a deep sense of the importance of his duties. I came in for a share of blame, though I was only a looker-on. Bige said the deacon called me a "parsnip scrimmage," but more probably it was a *particeps criminis*.

But to proceed. One day I was taking home from the pasture, a horse that belonged to some clergyman —I believe Dr. Ripley, of Greensfarms. Just as I came upon the level ground in front of Jerry Mead's old house, Bige came up behind me on the deacon's mare—an ambling brute with a bushy tail and shaggy mane. As he approached, he gave a chirrup, and my horse, half in fright and half in fun, bounded away, like Tam O'Shanter's mare. Every hair in the creature's tail and mane stood out, as if spinning with electricity. Away we went, I holding on as well as I could, for the animal was round as a barrel. He was no doubt used to a frolic of this sort, although he belonged to a D. D., and looked as if he believed in total deprav-

ity. When he finally broke into a run, he flew like the wind, at the same time bounding up and down with a tearing energy, quite frightful to think of. After a short race, he went from under me, and I came with a terrible shock to the ground.

The breath was knocked out of me for some seconds, and as I recovered it with a gasping effort, my sensations were indescribably agonizing. Greatly humbled, and sorely bruised, I managed to get home, where the story of my adventure had preceded me. I was severely lectured by my parents, which, however, I might have forgotten, had not the concussion entered into my bones, and made an indelible impression upon my memory, thus perpetuating the wholesome counsel.

When I was about twelve years old, a man by the name of Sackett was employed to keep a high-school, or, as it was then called, an Academy. Here I went irregularly for a few weeks, and at a public exhibition I remember to have spoken a piece upon a stage fitted up in the meeting-house, entitled "Charles Chatterbox." Irad Hawley, Rufus H. King, and Sally Ingersoll, played Hagar and Ishmael. This was the substance of my achievements at Sackett's seminary.

The narrowness of my father's income, and the needs of a large family, induced him to take half a dozen pupils to be fitted for college. This he continued for a series of years. Some of his scholars

came from New Haven, some from Danbury, and some from other places. I may remark, in passing, that a number of these—some of whom are still living—distinguished themselves in various liberal pursuits. It might seem natural that I should have shared in these advantages; but, in the first place, my only and elder brother, Charles A. Goodrich—now widely known by his numerous useful publications—had been destined for the clerical profession, partly by his own predilection, partly by encouragement from a relative, and partly too from an idea that his somewhat delicate constitution forbade a more hardy career. To this may doubtless be added the natural desire of his parents that at least one of their sons should follow the honored calling to which father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had been devoted. Hence, he was put in training for college. The expenses to be thus incurred were formidable enough to my parents, without adding to them, by attempting any thing of the kind for me. And besides, I had manifested no love of study, and evidently preferred action to books. Moreover, it must be remembered that I was regarded as a born carpenter, and it would have seemed a tempting of Providence to have set me upon any other career. So, with perfect content on my part, from the age of twelve to fourteen, I was chiefly employed in active services about the house and farm. I could read, write, and cipher; this was sufficient for my ambi-

tion, and satisfactory to my parents, in view of the life to which I was apparently destined.

Nevertheless, though my school exercises were such as I have described, I doubtless gathered some little odds and ends of learning about those days, beyond the range of my horn-books. I heard a good deal of conversation from the clergymen who visited us, and above all, I listened to the long discourses of Lieutenant Smith upon matters and things in general. My father, too, had a brother in Congress, from whom he received letters, documents, and messages, all of which became subjects of discussion. I remember furthermore, that out of some childish imitation, I thumbed over Corderius and Erasmus—the first Latin books, then constantly in the hands of my father's pupils. I was so accustomed to hear them recite their lessons in Virgil, that

Tityre tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi—

and

Arma, arms—*virumque*, and the man—*cano*, I sing—

were as familiar to my ears as *hillery, tillery, zachery zan*, and probably conveyed to my mind about as much meaning. Even the first lesson in Greek—

Ἐν, in—ἀρχῇ, the beginning—ἦν, was—ὁ λόγος, the Word—

was also among the cabalistic jingles in my memory. All this may seem nothing as a matter of education; still, some years after, while I was an appren-

tice in Hartford, feeling painfully impressed with the scantiness of my knowledge, I borrowed some Latin school-books, under the idea of attempting to master that language. To my delight and surprise, I found that they seemed familiar to me. Thus encouraged, I began, and bending steadily over my task at evening, when my day's duties were over, I made my way nearly through the Latin Grammar and the first two books of Virgil's Æneid. In my poverty of knowledge, even these acquisitions became useful to me.

From the age of twelve to fifteen, in the midst of my activity, I still lived largely upon dreams. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the extravagance of these, except it might be their vividness and seeming reality, in contrast to all the probabilities of my condition. Though generally occupied in the various tasks assigned me, I still found a good deal of time to ramble over the country. Whole days I spent in the long, lonesome lanes that wound between Ridgefield and Salem; in the half-cultivated, half-wooded hills that lay at the foot of West Mountain, and in the deep recesses of the wild and rugged regions beyond. I frequently climbed to the top of the cliffs and ridges that rose one above another, and having gained the crown of the mountain, cast long and wistful glances over the blue vale that stretched out for many miles to the westward. I had always my gun in hand, and though not insensible to any sport that might fall in my way, I was more

absorbed in the fancies that came thronging to my imagination. I had a love of solitary and even desolate scenes: there seemed to be in me an appetite that found satisfaction in the wild and precipitous passes of the wilderness. This, after an absence of a few weeks, would return like hunger and thirst, and I felt a longing for the places which appeased it. Thus I became familiar with the whole country around, and especially with the shaded glens and gorges of West Mountain. I must add that these had, besides their native, savage charms, a sort of fascination from being the residence of a strange woman, who had devoted herself to solitude, and was known under the name of the *Hermitess*. This personage—whom I shall hereafter describe more particularly—I had occasionally seen in our village, and I frequently met her as she glided through the forests, while I was pursuing my mountain rambles. I sometimes felt a strange thrill as she passed, but this only seemed to render the recesses where she dwelt still more inviting.

Of all the seasons, autumn was to me the most pleasing. Even late in November, when the leaves had fallen and were driven about in eddies by the hollow winds—the tall trees creaking and moaning aloft—the remote and solitary wilds had their fascination. There was in me certainly none of the misanthropic feeling which made Byron fall in love with such scenes. Nevertheless, some passages in

Childe Harold, which appeared a few years after, described the emotions I then experienced, and gave full expression to the struggling but imprisoned thoughts which filled my bosom. It is one of the highest offices of the poet to furnish words for the deep, yet unspoken poetry of the soul. Certainly no language of mine can express the delight with which I have read and re-read the following stanza, and which has ever seemed to me like unsealing a mystic fountain in my bosom—that has since flowed on in a stream of pleasing associations.

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been—
To climb the trackless mountain, all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold–
Alone o'er steeps and pouring falls to lean:
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd."

I must repeat that however much I was attracted by these wild and lonesome scenes, and however I may have felt a tinge of melancholy in my solitary walks, I had no feeling of unhappiness, no oppressive sense of isolation, no anxiety, no *ennui*. It is true that at such times, there came to me scraps of solemn poetry from Milton, Young, and Watts, of which my mother's mind was full, and which she loved to repeat. These broke in snatches upon my memory, and

served as lightning-rods to conduct to my lips some of the burning emotions of my breast. I remember often to have repeated them, half aloud, while I was in the woods, though doubtless without having any very exact appreciation of their meaning, or the slightest regard to any fitness of application. I could not then write a reliable line of sense or grammar; still, among my fancies I planned poems, and even dreamed of literary fame. Such I was in fact to my own consciousness, while at the same time I was regarded by all around as a rather thoughtless, though happy boy, with a genius for whittling.

I have no doubt that I inherited from my mother a love of the night side of nature—not a love that begets melancholy, but an appetite that found pleasure in the shadows as well as the lights of life and imagination. Eminently practical as she was—laborious, skillful, and successful in the duties which Providence had assigned her, as the head of a large family, with narrow means—she was still of a poetic temperament. Her lively fancy was vividly set forth by a pair of the finest eyes I have ever seen—dark and serious, yet tender and sentimental. These bespoke not only the vigor of her conceptions, but the melancholy tinge that shaded her imagination. Sometimes indeed the well of sadness in her heart became full, and it ran over in tears. These, however, were like spring showers—brief in duration, and afterward brightening to all around. She was not the only woman who

has felt better after a good cry. It was, in fact, a poetic, not a real sorrow, that thus excited her emotions, for her prevailing humor abounded in wit and vivacity, not unfrequently taking the hue of playful satire. Nevertheless, her taste craved the pathetic, the mournful—not as a bitter medicine, but a spicy condiment. Her favorite poets were King David and Dr. Watts: she preferred the dirge-like melody of Windham to all other music. All the songs she sang were minors. Alas! how few are now living to verify this feeble portrait—among the cloud of witnesses who would once have testified to the general, though inadequate resemblance!

You will gather from what I have said that my father not only prayed in his family night and morning; but before breakfast, and immediately after the household was assembled, he always read a chapter in the sacred volume. In our family Bible it is recorded that he thus read that holy book through, in course, thirteen times, in the space of about five and twenty years. He was an excellent reader, having a remarkably clear, frank, hearty voice, so that I was deeply interested, and thus early became familiar with almost every portion of the Old and New Testament. The narrative passages seized most readily upon my attention, and formed the greater part of my early knowledge. The direct, simple style of the Bible entered into my heart, and became for a long time my standard of taste in literary composition. It cost

me a real struggle, long afterward, to relish the magniloquence of such writers as Johnson, despite the smack of Latin and Greek in its composition, and the ponderous force of thought which it conveyed.

The practice of family worship, as I before stated, was at this time very general in New England. In Ridgefield, it was not altogether confined to the strictly religious—to clergymen, deacons, and church members. It was a custom which decency hardly allowed to be omitted. No family was thought to go on well without it. There is a good story which well describes this trait of manners.

Somewhere in Vermont, in this golden age, there was a widow by the name of Bennett. In consequence of the death of her husband, the charge of a large farm and an ample household devolved upon her. Her husband had been a pious man, and all things had prospered with him. His widow, alike from religious feeling and affectionate regard for his memory, desired that every thing should be conducted as much as possible as it had been during his lifetime. Especially did she wish the day to begin and close with family worship.

Now she had a foreman on the farm by the name of Ward. He was a good man for work, but faith had not yet touched his lips, much less his heart. In vain did the widow, in admitting his merits at the plow, the scythe, and the flail, still urge him to crown her wishes by leading in family prayer. For a long

time the heart of the man was hard, and his ear deaf to her entreaties. At last, however, wearied with her importunities, he seemed to change, and to her great joy, consented to make a trial.

On a bright morning in June—at early sunrise—the family were all assembled in the parlor, men and maidens, for their devotions. When all was ready, Ward, in a low, troubled voice, began. He had never prayed—or at least not in public—but he had heard many prayers, and possessed a retentive memory. After getting over the first hesitancy, he soon became fluent, and taking passages here and there from the various petitions he had heard—Presbyterian, Methodist, Universalist, and Episcopalian—he went on with great eloquence, gradually elevating his tone and accelerating his delivery. Ere long his voice grew portentous, and some of the men and maids, thinking he was suddenly taken either mad or inspired, stole out on their toes into the kitchen, where, with gaping mouths, they awaited the result. The Widow Bennett bore it all for about half an hour; but at last, as the precious time was passing away, she lost patience, and sprang to her feet. Placing herself directly in front of the speaker, she exclaimed, "Ward, what do you mean?"

As if suddenly relieved from a nightmare, he exclaimed, "Oh dear, ma'am—I'm much obliged to you—for I couldn't contrive to wind off."

I hope you will not feel that this anecdote par-

takes of a license unworthy of these annals, for as you see, it has an historical foundation, as well as a practical moral. I regret to leave a doubt in regard to one of the details, and that is, that I have not been able to determine whether on this occasion the family stood up, leaning over the backs of their chairs, or knelt before the seats. The former was the custom in my younger days, Puritanism perhaps not having overcome the fear of imitating the soul-endangering practices of prelacy, whether belonging to Mother Church of England or the Scarlet Lady of Rome. Perhaps, too, the fatigue of standing was deemed an acceptable sacrifice: I say fatigue, for in those days, men gifted in prayer were like the ocean—so deep in spots that it required a very long line to reach the bottom. Deacon Cooke, of Danbury, a very sensible and pious man, by the way, once said that he did not believe the spirit of prayer could be sustained, on ordinary occasions, for more than five minutes at a time. This, however, was rank heresy then, and was not understood or approved till fifty years after. Granther Baldwin was a better representative of the age I am speaking of: beginning at the Creation, and coming down to the Fall, he would go on through Babel, Babylon, and Balaam, the landing of the Pilgrims, Braddock's defeat, and the Declaration of Independence. These things, added to local matters, usually consumed half an hour at the evening exercises. After a hard day's work—especially in summer time

—it required a strong understanding to endure it. John Benedict, then paying his addresses to Esther Baldwin, whom he afterward married, one night fell asleep over his chair, at prayer-time, and pitching forward against Granther Baldwin, overturned both him and his devotions. John barely escaped being forbidden ever to enter the house again; indeed, he stayed away some weeks, and only returned upon Esther's going after him.

This happened near the beginning of the present century: some five and twenty years later, kneeling at family prayers had become common in Connecticut. A similar change had also begun in meeting-house worship. At the present time, it is common for people in Congregational churches even, to kneel at prayer-time. I am not able to state, authoritatively, the reason for this change, though I presume, as just intimated, it has arisen from the gradual wearing away of the Puritan prejudice against kneeling. If this be correct, it indicates an important fact, which is, that sectarian differences, especially those of mere form, have greatly subsided of late years. It is in respect to these, that there have been the most bitter contentions; the movement here noticed has, therefore, in all its bearings, the significance of a real reform.

It is stated that when the first Congress assembled at Philadelphia, September, 1774, the members, duly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, nat-

urally desired the aid of religious exercises, and therefore the appointment of a chaplain was proposed. But considering that the persons present were of various creeds, it was feared that they could not unite in the choice of a clergyman to fulfill the duties of such an office. The difficulty was, however, happily removed by Samuel Adams, of Massachusetts, who, although a rigid Congregationalist, proposed the appointment of an Episcopalian, and Dr. Duché, a popular preacher of Philadelphia, was immediately chosen. It must have been an interesting scene—a minister, bound to forms, finding extemporaneous words to suit the occasion, and the Quaker, the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian, and the Rationalist—some kneeling, some standing, but all praying, and looking to Heaven for wisdom and counsel, in this hour of doubt, anxiety, and responsibility. Here is a worthy subject* for the pencil of Weir, Powell, Huntington, Healy, Page, Terry, Rossiter, or some other of our historical painters. Adams and Sherman, the Puritans, standing erect; Thompson, the Quaker, finding the movement of the Spirit in the words of a consecrated priest; with Washington, Henry, and other Episcopalians, kneeling, according to their creed, and all invoking wisdom from above—would make a touching and instructive picture. Its moral would be, that

* I understand that this subject—"The First Prayer in Congress"—has been painted and engraved, but not in the style suited to a great national subject.

the greatest minds, in moments of difficulty and danger, acknowledge their dependence upon God, and feel the necessity of elevating and purifying their hearts by prayer; and that the differences of sect, the distinctions of form, all vanish when emergency presses upon the consciences of men, and forces them to a sincere and open avowal of their convictions.

In looking back to this period, and remembering the impassable gulfs that lay between Christian sects, it is gratifying to observe what is now witnessed every Sabbath in our principal cities—the Episcopalian, while maintaining his creed and his forms, still receiving to his communion-table the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Congregationalist, the Unitarian, the Universalist—all who profess to be followers of Christ, while these sectarians exercise a similar charity in return. Is not this progress—is not this reform? How much is meant by these simple facts—the communion-table of Christ extended; the heart of man expanded, purified, ennobled!

I must not pass over another incident in my memory, and having reference to the topic in hand. Under the biblical influence of these days, my father's scholars built a temple of the Philistines, and when it was completed within and without, all the children round about assembled, as did the Gazaites of old. The edifice was chiefly of boards, slenderly constructed, and reached the height of twelve feet; nevertheless, all of us got upon it, according to the 16th

chapter of Judges. The oldest of the scholars played Samson. When all was ready, he took hold of the pillars of the temple—one with his right hand and one with his left. "Let me die with the Philistines!" said he, and bowing himself, down we came in a heap! Strange to say, nobody but Samson was hurt, and he only in some skin bruises. If you could see him now—dignified even to solemnity, and seldom condescending to any but the gravest matters—you would scarcely believe the story, even though I write it and verify it. Nevertheless, if he must have played, he should have taken the part of Samson, for he is one of the most gifted men I have ever known.

LETTER XIII.

My Father's Library—Children's Books—The New England Primer and Westminster Catechism—Toy Books—Nursery Books—Moral Effect of these—Hannah More's Moral Repository—The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain—Visit to Barley-wood—First Idea of the Parley Books—Impressions of Big Books and Little Books—A Comparison of the Old Books and the New Books for Children and Youth—A Modern Juvenile Bookstore in Broadway.

My dear C******

You will readily comprehend from what I have said, that up to the age of ten or twelve years, I had made little acquaintance with literature. Beyond my school-books, I had read almost nothing.

My father had a considerable library, but it consisted mostly of theology, a great deal of it in Latin, and in large folios. Into such a forbidding mass, I never penetrated, save only that I sometimes dipped into a big volume, which happened to be in large print. This was in English, and was, I suspect, some discussion of Calvin's Five Points; still it attracted my attention, and sometimes, especially of a rainy day, when I could hear the big drops thump upon the shingles over my head—for the library was in the second loft, and led by an open stairway to the attic—I read whole pages of this book aloud, spelling out the large words as well as I could. I did not understand a sentence of it, but I was fascinated with the fair large type. This circumstance I have never forgotten, and it should not be overlooked by those who make books for children, for in this case, I was but a representative of others of my age.

It is difficult now, in this era of literary affluence, almost amounting to surfeit, to conceive of the poverty of books suited to children in the days of which I write. Except the New England Primer—the main contents of which were the Westminster Catechism—and some rhymes, embellished with hideous cuts of Adam's Fall, in which "we sinned all;" the apostle and a cock crowing at his side, to show that "Peter denies his Lord and cries;" Nebuchadnezzar crawling about like a hog, the bristles sticking out of his back, and the like—I remember none that were in general use

among my companions. When I was about ten years old, my father brought from Hartford, Gaffer Ginger, Goody Two Shoes, and some of the rhymes and jingles, now collected under the name of Mother Goose, —with perhaps a few other toy books of that day. These were a revelation. Of course I read them, but I must add with no real relish.

Somewhat later one of my companions lent me a volume containing the stories of Little Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, Blue Beard, Jack the Giant-killer, and some other of the tales of horror, commonly put into the hands of youth, as if for the express purpose of reconciling them to vice and crime. Some children, no doubt, have a ready appetite for these monstrosities, but to others they are revolting, until by repetition and familiarity, the taste is sufficiently degraded to relish them. At all events, they were shocking to me. Even Little Red Riding Hood, though it seized strongly upon my imagination, excited in me the most painful impressions. I believed it to be true; at least it was told with the air of truth, and I regarded it as a picture of life. I imagined that what happened to the innocent child of the cottage, might happen to me and to others. I recollect, while the impression was fresh in my mind, that on going to bed, I felt a creeping horror come over me, as the story recurred to my imagination. As I dwelt upon it, I soon seemed to see the hideous jaws of a wolf coming out of the bedclothes, and approach-

ing as if to devour me. My disposition was not timid, but the reverse; yet at last I became so excited, that my mother was obliged to tell me that the story was a mere fiction.

"It is not true, then?" said I.

"No," said my mother, "it is not true."

"Why do they tell such falsehoods, then?" I replied.

"They are not falsehoods, because they are not intended to deceive. They are mere tales invented to amuse children."

"Well, they don't amuse me!"

I do not remember the rest of the conversation: this general impression, however, remained on my mind, that children's books were either full of nonsense, like "hie diddle diddle" in Mother Goose, or full of something very like lies, and those very shocking to the mind, like Little Red Riding Hood. From that time my interest in them was almost wholly lost. I had read Puss in Boots, but that seemed to me without meaning, unless it was to teach us that a Good Genius may cheat, lie, and steal; in other words, that in order to show gratitude to a friend, we may resort to every kind of meanness and fraud. I never liked cats, and to make one of that race—sly, thieving, and bloodthirsty by instinct—the personification of virtue, inclined me, so far as the story produced any moral effect, to hate virtue itself.

The story of Blue Beard made a stronger and still

more painful impression upon me. Though I knew it to be a fiction, it was still in some sort a reality to me. His castle, with its hideous chamber hung with the ghastly corpses of his murdered wives, was more a living truth in my imagination, than any fact in history or geography. In spite of my efforts to cast it out, it remained with all its horrors—a dreadful burden upon my mind.

Still worse was the story of Jack the Giant-killer. He, too, was a good genius, but of course—according to the taste of this species of composition—a great liar. One should feel sympathy with such a gallant little fellow, especially in combating giants like Blunderbore, whose floor was covered with human skulls, and whose daintiest food consisted of "men's hearts, seasoned with pepper and vinegar!" Surely—such is the moral of the tale—we must learn to forgive, nay, to love and approve, wickedness—lying, deception, and murder—when they are employed for good and beneficent purposes! At least, the weak may use any weapons against the strong: the little may conspire against the great: and in such a contest, all weapons are lawful and laudable.

How far this supper of horrors familiarized my own mind with violence, and thus defaced that moral sense, which is common in children—leading them to prefer the good, the true, and the beautiful, if it be duly cherished—I cannot venture to say. How far this potent but wicked logic of example, this argument

of action—vividly wrought into the imagination and the mind—in favor of meanness, deception, and crime, served to abate the natural love of truth and honor in my bosom, I do not pretend to conjecture. Doubtless, I suffered less, because my taste was shocked; still, the "evil communications" were in my soul. Had it not been for the constant teaching of rectitude, by precept and example, in the conduct of my parents, I might, to say the least, have been seriously injured. In looking back, and judging of the matter now, I believe it would certainly have been so. As it was, these things were fearful temptations, and I am convinced that much of the vice and crime in the world are to be imputed to these atrocious books put into the hands of children, and bringing them down, with more or less efficiency, to their own debased moral standard.

That such tales should be invented and circulated in a barbarous age, I can easily conceive; that they should even be acceptable to the coarse tastes and rude feelings of society, where all around is a system of wrong, duplicity, and violence, is not a matter of surprise. But that they should be put into the hands of children, and by Christian parents, and that too in an age of light and refinement—excites in me the utmost wonder.

The common opinion, no doubt, is, that they are at least amusing; that at the same time they are too improbable on the very face to carry with them any

moral effect. This is a double mistake. The love of the horrible, the monstrous, the grotesque, is not indigenous to the youthful mind—unless it may be in certain anomalous cases. There are children, as I have said, who seem to be born with a proclivity to evil. There are others, who, from the unhappy influence of malign example, seem to show an early development of debased tastes. But in general the child revolts at these things, and it is not till it is broken in by repetition, till it is reconciled by familiarity, that it begins to crave them. A child loves at once a kitten, a chicken, a doll—the innocent semblances of itself; but will usually fly into a passion of repugnance at the sight of any thing monstrous in nature or art.

The idea that familiarity with crime is harmless, is equally at variance with experience. The Bible is full of warnings against the deadly effect of bad ideas communicated by example. Common sense—the first instinct of reason—tells us not to take children into scenes of crime and bloodshed, unless we wish to debase them. There is little difference, as to moral effect upon children, between things real and things imaginary. All that is strongly conceived by the young, is reality to them. The tale of Jack the Giant-killer in the book, is very much the same as would be the incidents of the story acted out at the theater, or the reality performed before the eye. In all these cases, it fills the mind with evil, and commends

evil, by inevitable influence. Is it not leading children into fearful temptation, to put such works as these into their hands? It will be understood that I am here speaking more particularly of nursery books. These, from the impressibility of young children, and from the fact that the judgment is not yet developed and exercises little control over the mind—produce a most powerful effect. Yet it is only for such that the books referred to have been framed, as if, in a diabolical spirit of mischief, at once to deprave the taste, and degrade the intellect of childhood.

At a somewhat later date—that is, when I was about twelve years old—I read Robinson Crusoe, which greatly delighted me. The work had about a dozen engravings, in which Crusoe and his man Friday were depicted somewhat like two black spiders: nevertheless, my imagination endued them with charms equal to those of Heath's Book of Beauty in after times. About this period, I met with Alphonso and Dalinda, a translation of one of Madame de Genlis' Tales of the Castle. I have never seen it since, but I judge by its effect upon my imagination, that it must be written with great skill and knowledge of the youthful mind. The manner in which a series of romantic and wonderful incidents are philosophically explained, seemed to me exceedingly felicitous, and certainly gave me my first glimpses of some of the more curious marvels of Natural History and Natural Philosophy.

From this point I made my way into works designed for adults, and now began to read voyages, travels, and histories. Thus a new world was within my reach, though as yet I did not realize it. About this time I met with Hannah More's Moral Repository, which, so far as I recollect, was the first work that I read with real enthusiasm. That I devoured. The story of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain was to me only inferior to the Bible narrative of Joseph and his brethren. Twenty years after, I enjoyed the pleasure, I might almost say ecstasy, of passing over the scene of this inimitable story, and of telling my experience to the author at Barley-wood. It was in conversation with that amiable and gifted person, that I first formed the conception of the Parley Tales—the general idea of which was to make nursery books reasonable and truthful, and thus to feed the young mind upon things wholesome and pure, instead of things monstrous, false, and pestilent: that we should use the same prudence in giving aliment to the mind and soul, as to the body; and as we would not give blood and poison as food for the latter, we should not administer cruelty and violence, terror and impurity, to the other. In short, that the elements of nursery books should consist of beauty instead of deformity, goodness instead of wickedness, decency instead of vulgarity.

So far as I can recollect, the work just alluded to first gave me a taste for reading, and awakened my

mind to some comprehension of the amazing scope and power of books. I had heard the Bible read from beginning to end, and the narrative portions had attracted my attention and deeply interested me. I had heard scraps of poetry and passages of prose, quoted and recited by my mother and my sisters older than myself and who had been well educated, mostly at New Haven. I had heard abundance of learned conversation among doctors of divinity and doctors of laws, who, with others, visited my father's house; and finally I had heard the disquisitions, historical, biblical, and philosophical, of our profound and erudite village oracle, Lieutenant Smith; yet I do not recollect to have discovered, before this time, that books contained inexhaustible sources of instruction and amusement, and all within my own reach. I had listened to what I heard, though often impatiently, and doubtless I had picked up and pocketed, here and there, an idea. Such, however, had been the course of my life, or such was my disposition, or such the books that had fallen into my hands, that I regarded big books as tasks, proper for the learned, but not fit for such as me; and little books as nonsense, or worse than nonsense, worthy only of contempt or aversion. What a real blessing would then have been to me the juvenile works of Mrs. Child, the little histories of Agnes Strickland, the tales of Mary Howitt, Mrs. Hoffland, and other similar works, so familiar to children now.

As to schoolbooks, those I had used had become associated in my memory with sitting three hours at a time upon hard oak benches, my legs all the while in such a cramped position that I could almost have kicked my best friend by way of relief.

In casting my mind backward over the last thirty years—and comparing the past with the present, duly noting the amazing advances made in every thing which belongs to the comfort, the intelligence, the luxury of society—there is no point in which these are more striking than in the books for children and youth. Let any one who wishes to comprehend this matter, go to such a juvenile bookstore as that of C. S. Francis, in Broadway, New York, and behold the teeming shelves—comprising almost every topic within the range of human knowledge, treated in a manner to please the young mind, by the use of every attraction of style and every art of embellishment—and let him remember that nineteen twentieths of these works have come into existence within the last thirty years. He will then see how differently this age estimates the importance of juvenile instruction, from any other that has gone before it.

LETTER XIV.

The Clergymen of Fairfield County—The Minister's House a Minister's Tavern—Dr. Ripley, of Green's-farms—Dr. Lewis, of Horseneck—Dr. Burnett, of Norwalk—Mr. Swan—Mr. Noyes—Mr. Elliott, of Fairfield—Mr. Mitchell, of New Canaan—A Poet-Deacon—Dr. Blatchford, the Clairvoyant—Mr. Bartlett, of Reading—Mr. Camp, of Ridgebury—Mr. Smith, of Stamford—Mr. Waterman, of Bridgeport, &c.—Manners of the Clergy of Fairfield County—Their Character—Anecdote of the Laughing D. D.—The Coming Storm.

My dear C******

Before I complete my narrative, so far as it relates to Ridgefield, I should state that in the olden time a country minister's home was a minister's tavern, and therefore I saw, at different periods, most of the orthodox or Congregational clergymen belonging to that part of the State, at our house. My father frequently exchanged with those of the neighboring towns, and sometimes consociations and associations were held at Ridgefield. Thus, men of the clerical profession constituted a large portion of the strangers who visited us. I may add that my lineage was highly ministerial from an early period down to my own time. The pulpit of Durham, filled by my paternal grandfather, continued in the same family one hundred and twenty-six consecutive years. A short time since, we reckoned among our relations, not going beyond the degree of second cousin, more than a dozen ministers of the Gospel, and all of the same creed.

As to the clergy of Fairfield county, my boyish impressions of them were, that they were of the salt of the earth—rock-salt, the very crystals of Christianity; nor has a larger experience altered my opinion. If I sometimes indulge a smile at the recollection of particular traits of character, or more general points of manners significant of the age, I still regard them with affection and reverence. Some of them were grave and portly, especially those who bore the awe-inspiring title of Doctors of Divinity. I cannot now recollect among them all a single little or emaciated D. D. At the very head of the list, in my imagination, was Dr. Ripley, of Green's-farms, now Southport, I believe. He was a large and learned man—two hundred pounds avoirdupois of solid divinity. He read the Bible in the original tongues for diversion, and digested Hebrew roots as if they had been buttered parsnips. He was withal a hale, hearty old gentleman, with a rich, ruddy smile over his face, bespeaking peace within and without. I was once at his house, which commanded a fine view of Long Island Sound, and particularly of Compo Bay, which was near at hand. I remember that he told me about the landing of the British there, under Tryon, in April, 1777, on their expedition against Danbury—a story in which I took deep interest, for I had already heard a good deal concerning it from Lieut. Smith.

Dr. Lewis, of Horseneck, weighed less according to the steelyards: he had perhaps less Greek and Latin

in him, but I have an impression that he was a man even more full of godliness. He was in fact the patron saint of my young fancy, and his image still seems before me. He was of the middle size, neither fat nor lean, stooped a little, and had a thin face with a long nose. Yet his countenance was the very seat of kindliness, charity, and sanctity. His thin, white locks floated down his cheeks and over his shoulders in apostolic folds. His voice was soft, yet penetrating. He had not, I think, any prodigious power of intellect, but during his preaching every ear was intent, every heart open. The congregation sometimes nodded, especially of a hot summer Sunday, even beneath the thunders of Dr. Ripley; nay, Deacon Olmsted himself, enthroned in the deacon's seat, was obliged now and then to take out his sprig of fennel, in the very midst of the doctor's twelfthlies and fifteenthlies; but nobody ever slept under the touching and sympathetic tones of Dr. Lewis. The good man has long since been translated to another world, but the perfume of his goodness still lingers amid the churches which were once impressed with his footsteps.

Among the other clerical celebrities of this period was Dr. Burnett, of Norwalk—a man of distinguished ability, but of whom I have only a faint remembrance. His successor, Mr. Swan, was one of the most eloquent men of the day. I shall never forget a certain passage in one of his addresses at an evening meeting. He had taken as a motto for his discourse

—"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Josh. xxiv. 15. Having pressed upon the audience the necessity of deciding whether they would serve God or the Adversary, he adverted to an anecdote in ancient history, in which an ambassador to some foreign state—demanding a decision of the government in a question under discussion — drew a line upon the earth with his staff, and said, "Tell me—here, this very hour—*now*—where will you stand, on this side or that, for us or against us? Shall it be peace or shall it be war?" Mr. Swan was a tall man, and as he said this, he seemed to mark the line upon the ground with a solemn sweep of his long arm. He then added, addressing the audience in tones that thrilled and awed every heart, "Tell me here, this very hour, *now* —where will you stand? Where will you stand tonight—where at the day of judgment—on this side or that—for God or against Him? Shall it be peace or war? peace forever, or war through the measureless ages of eternity?" I can recall no eloquence—and I have heard the most celebrated orators of my time —which produced a more deep, fearful, and startling emotion, than this.

There was another minister — the very antipode of the one I have just described, and yet a great and good man in his way—great and good in the effect of his life. His name was Noyes, and he was settled at Weston. He was a person of moderate intellect, yet his benignant face and kindly voice suggested to

the imagination that disciple whom Jesus loved. His whole conduct was but a fulfillment of what his countenance promised. Mr. Elliot, of Fairfield, I do not recollect personally, but I have heard about his preaching against the New Lights—the Methodists and revivalists—who then began to disturb the quiet of orthodoxy. He asserted that, "as in nature it is the mizzling, fizzling rain, and not the overwhelming torrent, that fertilizes the fields, so in religion, it is the quiet dew of the Holy Spirit that produces the harvest of souls." I give the story and the words as I heard them.

Mr. Mitchell, of New Canaan, was a man of ability and influence, but I remember more of his successors than of him. There being a vacancy in the parish, the people tried several candidates—one named Hough, one named Hyde, &c.; but none of them suited everybody. At last came Mr. Bonney. "Well," said one of the deacons as if by inspiration—

> "We have now had Hough and Hyde,
> Let us take Bonney and ride."

This from the lips of a deacon sounded like prophecy, and so Mr. Bonney was duly called and installed.

Mr. Fisher, of Wilton, was of comely and imposing presence, and withal an able man. As was proper, he became a D. D. Mr. Dwight, of Greenfield Hill, was afterward the renowned President of Yale College. I shall have occasion to speak of him again.

Mr. Humphries, of Fairfield, became President of Amherst College, and is now living at Pittsfield, enjoying at the age of seventy-seven, the full vigor of manhood—with an enviable reputation as a ripe scholar, an eloquent preacher, a good and great man, combining the dignity of the divine with the amiable and attractive qualities of the friend, the citizen, and the neighbor.

Dr. Blatchford, of Bridgeport, removed early to Waterford, near Troy, N. Y., and I can only remember to have seen him; his personal appearance has vanished from my mind. I recollect, however, that he had a horror of cats and kittens, and such was its intensity as to endue him with clairvoyance, so that he could easily detect one of these creatures in the room, though it might be out of sight or even confined in a closet. Frequent attempts were made to deceive him, but without success. His instinct was infallible. When he was seen coming, the first thing attended to by my mother was to shut up the whole purring family, and they were kept under lock and key till the good doctor had departed. Once upon a time, while dining with a friend, he suddenly threw down his knife and fork, his face being pale with horror.

"What is the matter?" ejaculated his host, in great excitement.

"It is a cat!" said the doctor, in a hollow voice.

"A cat?" was the thrilling reply. "Impossible:

we were particular to shut up the cat and kittens as soon as you came."

"I say there's a cat in the room!" said the doctor, with fearful emphasis.

A hurry-scurry ensued, and after a long search, a kitten was found slumbering in the cradle, under the clothes, and snugged down beside the baby!

There were, furthermore, Mr. Bartlett, of Reading, an animated and learned preacher—now a hale and hearty man at the age of ninety-two; Mr. Camp, of Ridgebury, of a feeble body but powerful mind; Mr. Smith, of Stamford, a dignified gentleman of the old school, and married to the sister of John Cotton Smith, afterward Governor of the State; Mr. Waterman, of Bridgeport, author of a clever Life of Calvin.

From these hasty notes, you will see that the clergy of that day in Fairfield county were a very able set of men, and worthy of being duly and honorably chronicled in these mementoes of the past. I speak of the era of 1800, yet including a few subsequent years. A half century before, a wig with a black coat meant D. D.; and D. D. usually meant wig and black coat: but that dynasty had passed. Breeches and white-top boots—white meaning butternut color—were, however, still clerical.

These gentlemen whom I have described, traveled on horseback, and were always well mounted; some of them were amateurs in horseflesh: I have already had occasion to notice the points of Dr. Rip-

ley's beast. In manners they were polite, and somewhat assiduous in their stately courtesies. They spoke with authority, and not as the scribes. Their preaching was grave in manner, and in matter elaborately dovetailed with Scripture. The people drank hard cider, and relished sound doctrine: it was not till nearly half a century afterward that—imbibing soda-water, champagne, and other gaseous beverages—they required pyrotechnics in the pulpit. A soul to reach heaven must then have the passport of Saybrook; and in point of fact, orthodoxy was so tempered with charity, that nearly all who died, received it.

If the creed of that day was severe and bespoke the agonies of its Puritan origin, it still allowed large range for temporalities and humanities. The minister of the Gospel was a father, neighbor, friend, citizen—a man in a large and generous sense. Manliness meant godliness, and godliness manliness. He spoke truth, and acted righteousness. He was independent in his circumstances, for a parish settlement was like marriage, for better or for worse: and what God had joined, man could not lightly put asunder. The common opinion now is, that the judges of temporal tribunals should be placed beyond the seductions of dependence; the people of those days thought that in matters relating to eternity, this rule was at least equally important. The clergymen were in some sort magistrates—not tech-

nically, but being generally the best educated persons—especially in country towns—they exercised a large influence, as well by the force of authority, traditionally allowed to their positions, as by their superior intelligence. They were sometimes consulted by their parishioners in matters of law* as well as gospel, often made out deeds, settled disputes between neighbors and neighborhoods, gave advice in difficult and doubtful questions of business, and imparted intelligence upon matters of history, geography, and politics.

I need not tell you that they were counsellors in religious matters—in the dark and anxious periods of the spirit—in times of sickness, at the approach of death. They sanctified the wedding, not refusing afterward to countenance the festivity which naturally ensued. They administered baptism, but only upon adults who made a profession, or upon the children of professors. I may add that despite their divinity, they were sociable in their manners and intercourse. The state of the Church was no doubt first in their minds; but ample room was left for the good things of life. Those who came to our house examined my brother in his Greek and Latin, and I went out be-

* Rev. Thomas Hawley, from Northampton, was settled in the first society in Ridgefield in the year 1714, and was their first pastor, and continued till his death in 1789. He was a man of great frankness and sociability, and an excellent scholar. He was very useful to the town, not only as a minister, but in a civil capacity, serving them as their town-clerk, and doing all their writing business till his decease.—*Manuscript History of Ridgefield, by S. G.*

hind the barn to gather tansey for their morning bitters. They dearly loved a joke, and relished anecdotes, especially if they bore a little hard upon the cloth. I remember some of them at which I have heard Dr. Ripley almost crack his sides, and seen even the saintly Dr. Lewis run over at the eyes with laughing. Shall I give you a specimen? The following will suffice, though I can not recollect who it was that told it.

Once upon a time there was a clergyman—the Rev. Dr. T.... of H....—a man of high character, and distinguished for his dignity of manner. But it was remarked that frequently as he was ascending the pulpit stairs he would smile, and sometimes almost titter, as if beset by an uncontrollable desire to laugh. This excited remark, and at last scandal. Finally, it was thought necessary for some of his clerical friends, at a meeting of the association, to bring up the matter for consideration.

The case was stated—the Rev. Dr. T.... being present. "Well, gentlemen," said he, "the fact charged against me is true, but I beg you to permit me to offer an explanation. A few months after I was licensed to preach, I was in a country town, and on a Sabbath morning was about to enter upon the services of the church. Back of the pulpit was a window, which looked out upon a field of clover, then in full bloom, for it was summer. As I rose to commence the reading of the Scriptures, I cast a glance

into the field, and there I saw a man performing the most extraordinary evolutions—jumping, whirling, slapping in all directions, and with a ferocious agony of exertion. At first I thought he was mad; but suddenly the truth burst upon me—he had buttoned up a bumblebee in his pantaloons! I am constitutionally nervous, gentlemen, and the shock of this scene upon my risible sensibilities was so great, that I could hardly get through the services. Several times I was upon the point of bursting into a laugh. Even to this day, the remembrance of this scene—through the temptation of the devil—often comes upon me as I am ascending the pulpit. This, I admit, is a weakness, but I trust it will rather excite your sympathy and your prayers than your reproaches."

Such were the orthodox—that is, the Congregational—clergy of Fairfield county,* doubtless to some extent examples of their brethren throughout New England, at the period of which I speak. The religious platform still stood planked to the State. The law still gave preference to orthodoxy, as it had done from the beginning. The time had not yet arrived when Methodism, Episcopacy, Democracy, should combine with radicalism to overturn the system which the fathers had built. The storm was brewing, but as yet it was scarcely noticed even by those who were soon to be overwhelmed by it.

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* See note IV., p. 539.

LETTER XV.

Ideas of the Pilgrim Fathers—Progress of Toleration—Episcopacy—Bishop Seabury—Dr. Duché—Methodism in America—In Connecticut—Anecdotes—Lorenzo Dow—The Wolf in my Father's Fold.

My dear C******

I have intimated that, at the period of which I am writing, there was a storm gathering which was speedily to sweep away the last vestige of that system of legal and statutory privilege which the Congregational clergy had enjoyed in Connecticut, from the foundation of the colony. The government at the beginning was a kind of theocracy, in which God was considered as the active and positive ruler, of whom the men appointed to office were the agents. This impression pervaded the minds of the first settlers of New England. These were all Independents in religion, who had been persecuted at home, and had come here to enjoy their peculiar worship without molestation. This was in fact the fundamental idea of the Puritan Fathers.

It was therefore not only with amazement, but indignation, that they found, as the population increased, that Quakers, Baptists, and other sectarians, came among them, and demanded toleration of their peculiar notions. In vain did they seek to crush out these disturbers of the public peace. Persecution

only made them thrive: the trampling heel of oppression benefited them, as hoeing among weeds renders them more rank and pestiferous—inasmuch as the roots strike deeper, and the multiplied and invigorated seed are scattered over a constantly widening surface.

To the oppressed Puritans in England, toleration of their peculiar faith was an obvious idea. Their circumstances suggested it as a right, and denial of it as a sin. They emigrated to the New World, carrying this conviction with them. But universal liberty of worship was not yet conceived: that was reserved for those Baptists, Quakers, and others, who, from their position, had begun to see the light, though it was even to them but dimly revealed. They sought rather, each sect for itself, the tolerance of their worship, than general toleration as the right of man. Roger Williams, indeed, seems to have made this discovery, yet at first he advocated it rather in the spirit of intolerance.

As time advanced, the malcontents increased, and although orthodoxy contended at every point, it was compelled to yield inch by inch, until, at the period around which my narrative revolves, only a single remnant of its ancient privileges remained in the statute book of Connecticut. That consisted in a law which compelled every man, on reaching his majority, to pay a tax to the Congregational society in whose bounds he lived, unless he lodged a certificate

with its clerk that he belonged to some other religious persuasion.

This became the point of attack, in which all the dissenting sects in religion, and all the opposers in politics, united. But the time for this union, as stated in a preceding letter, had not yet arrived. The heterogeneous particles were silently moving to their coalescence and their crystallization, forming in the end the party which took the watchword of TOLERATION, and which gained the ascendency in 1817; but as yet, the keenest sagacity had not seen the coming event—which was nevertheless near at hand.

Up to this time—the early part of this century—orthodoxy seemed, on the surface, to stand almost unquestioned in Connecticut.* Unitarianism had begun in Boston, but had not made any noticeable con-

* After this work was begun and considerably advanced, I happened to discover in the Historical Library of the Atheneum at Hartford, a manuscript account of Ridgefield—historical, descriptive, ecclesiastical, economical, &c.—prepared by my father in 1800, upon a request by the State authorities. Among other remarks of a general nature, I find the following:

"About the time that Paine's Age of Reason presented itself to view, like Milton's Description of Death—'Black it stood as night, fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell'—the horror of its features disgusted the people to such a degree that it has not yet had an advocate in this town."

"There have been, in years past, a number of people who called themselves Baptists, who showed much zeal in religion, and met in private houses for worship: at the present day they are much on the decline."

"A few have joined the Methodists, whose preachers, though very zealous, have made little impression on the minds of the people of this town." A little after this the Methodists increased in the manner I have related.

"Almost all the people attend public worship with the Congregation-

quests in the land of "steady habits." Methodism—destined soon to sweep over the State—only glimmered faintly, as a kind of heat-lightning, in the distant horizon, indicating the electricity that was in the atmosphere. Universalism, in the form of Restorationism, was doubtless planted in many minds, for the eloquent and enthusiastic Murray* had been preaching in the country. As yet, however, there were few organized societies of that persuasion—now so numerous—in the Union.

Episcopacy had been introduced at an early date. Indeed, Connecticut had the honor of receiving the

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alists or Episcopalians, and there is and has been, for a long time past, the utmost harmony and friendship prevailing between the several denominations of Christians here. They frequently worship together, and thus prove the efficacy of that Spirit whose leading characteristic is charity."

* John Murray, the first Universalist minister in Boston, was an Englishman, born about 1741. He became a preacher, and was at first a Calvinist, then a Wesleyan, then a follower of Whitfield. Afterward he went to London, and there plunged into the vortex of dissipation. In 1770, being in a state of poverty, he came to America, where he preached, and by his eloquence soon acquired a high degree of popularity. At one time (1775) he was chaplain to a regiment in Rhode Island. After preaching with success in various places, he was settled, in 1785, in Boston, where he continued till his death in 1815. He, as well as Winchester—a Universalist of great ability, and who, with Hosea Ballou, may be considered as the founder of modern Universalism in this country—was a Trinitarian; but his main doctrine was, that, "although sinners would rise to the resurrection of damnation, and at the judgment-day would call on the rocks to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, yet that after the judgment, the punishment was fulfilled, and the damnation ended." He believed that the *devil and his angels* only would be placed at the left hand of Christ, like the goats, and that *all mankind* would be placed at his right. Ballou, Balfour, and other Universalists of the modern sect, maintain that there will be no judgment-day and no future punishment.

first ordained bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, thus anticipating even Virginia, to whom the Church of England was a mother church from the beginning. This was Bishop Seabury,* who was consecrated in the year 1784, and established at New London.

I have heard of him a well-authenticated anecdote, which is very suggestive. On his arrival from England, whither he had been to acquire his high ecclesiastical honors, there was a general curiosity to see him and hear him preach, especially in Connecticut—although the mass of the people, being Congregation-

* Samuel Seabury, D. D., was a native of Groton, Conn., and was born in 1728. He graduated at Yale College, and then went to Scotland, to study medicine. He was there, however, ordained, and coming back to America, was settled at New Brunswick, New Jersey, as the missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Having been stationed for a time at Jamaica, in the West Indies, he returned, and was settled at West Chester. Here he wrote and published several pamphlets in favor of the Crown, and was consequently seized by a party of soldiers, and for a time imprisoned at New Haven. When New York fell into the hands of the British, he joined them there, and became chaplain to Fanning's tory regiment. After the peace, having been elected bishop by the Episcopal clergy of Connecticut, he went to England, and applied to the Archbishop of York for consecration. This could not be granted, as an indispensable condition to consecration was, by law, an oath of allegiance to the crown. After nearly a year of fruitless efforts to obtain his object in England, he made application to the bishops of Scotland, by whom he was consecrated in 1784. He then returned, and entered upon the duties of his office, making New London his residence. He was an able man, and exercised a beneficial influence in establishing and extending the Episcopal Church, not only in Connecticut, but in the country generally. He was a worthy predecessor of other bishops of Connecticut—Jarvis and Brownell—who have not only done honor to the Church over which they presided, but have contributed to swell the list of scholars and divines which adorn our literature and our ecclesiastical history.

alists, and knowing that he had been an active and conspicuous tory in the Revolution, were strongly prejudiced against him. In their imaginations, a bishop who preferred monarchy to a republic, and who was called "my lord bishop," rode in a coach,* and appeared in swelling robes, was something exceedingly formidable, if not dangerous, to Church and State.

When therefore he came to New Haven to preach, about this time—that is, soon after he had returned with his prelatic honors—the church was crowded to excess. Many who tried to get in were necessarily excluded. When the service was over, a man of the middle class met one of his friends at the door, who was unable to obtain admittance:

"Well, did you see him?" said the latter.

"Oh yes," was the reply.

"And did he preach?"

"Oh yes."

"And was he as proud as Lucifer?"

"Not a bit of it: why he preached in his shirt-sleeves!"

There was a considerable body of Episcopalians in the State, though chiefly confined to the larger towns. The professors of this religion throughout

* It is said that on one occasion he arrived at Yale College during the Commencement exercises, in his carriage, and a messenger was sent in to inquire if there was a seat for Bishop Seabury. Dr. Dwight, the President, sent back word that there were some two hundred bishops present, and he should be very happy to give him a place among them.

the Union, but more especially in New England, had been charged with being unfriendly to the Revolution, and it is known that a considerable portion of them were avowed tories during that painful struggle. Not only was Seabury a tory, but even Dr. Duché, who had been chaplain to the first Congress, and for a time was a zealous friend of liberty, fell from grace, and upon the occupation of Philadelphia by the British, joined them, and wrote a letter to Washington, calling upon him to give up the ungodly cause in which he was engaged.

The Episcopalians had indeed one tie more than other men to the "Old Country," and that was a powerful one. England was not only their mother in things secular but in things sacred, the sovereign being the head of that institution which to them was the Ark of the Covenant. Rebellion to the king was therefore a sort of sacrilege. And besides, the mass of the rebels were Puritans, Presbyterians, Independents, who rather repelled than invited sympathy and co-operation. It was more natural therefore, for the members of the English Church in America to take part with the king and against the Revolution, than for others.

No doubt the charge of want of patriotism was exaggerated; and as to Virginia, where Episcopacy was the dominant religion, it seems to have had less foundation. But at all events, this sect was not only repugnant to the people of New England, for the rea-

son assigned, but also on account of what they conceived to be its tone and aspect of aristocracy. Its progress, therefore, was, of course, slow in that quarter, and it may be remarked that it did not take a strong hold till, as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, it was separated from the English Church, and became, as it now is, an American establishment, wholly independent in its government and organization, though the same in doctrine as its transatlantic original.

At the period of which I am speaking—from the year 1800 to 1810—the relative number of Episcopalians in Connecticut was in respect to the orthodox probably about one to three or four. In Ridgefield, there was a small brown edifice, which was called the "Episcopal Church," though sometimes, by way of ridicule, the "*Episcopal Barn*." The sarcasm may be forgiven, for in those days the Episcopalians arrogated the word *church* as their exclusive property, just as the Catholics claim it now. The Congregationalists, according to their vocabulary, only held *meetings*, and their places of worship were nothing but *meeting-houses*. It is not till within the last ten years that the word *church* has been popularly applied to all places of worship.

The Episcopal church in Ridgefield, just mentioned, was situated on the main street, nearly opposite the Up-town school. Some years before, Dr. Perry had been installed there, but he began to preach his own

opinions, and finding himself in danger of being expelled, he abdicated, and became a physician—and a very eminent one. At length it became vacant, but in order to keep the holy fire alive, about once or twice a year it was opened, and service was held there. On these occasions the people flocked to see and hear the strange ceremonies, generally from curiosity, though perhaps there were a dozen persons of this persuasion. At the time of one of these performances, Amby Benedict, the revolving shoemaker, was engaged at our house, and he went to church—though, I believe, he was warned against it by some members of our household. On Monday morning, when he returned, we asked him about it—how he liked it, and what he thought of it.

"Well," said he, "there's too many apologies for me: it's all the while getting up and sitting down, and talking out loud. Why—if you'll believe it—there were three or four persons who kept mocking the parson, and saying 'awmen!' till I was rael 'shamed on 'em!"

For some years subsequent to this period, the Episcopal church of Ridgefield remained only as a monument of waste and decay, but at last it revived, and is now in a flourishing condition, as indicated by a handsome edifice, erected nearly on the site of the old structure. This revival is in harmony with the general increase and progress of Episcopacy throughout the United States.

Methodism, which had swept over England, came at last to America. Its success in both countries arose from several causes. The Anglo-Saxon race, from time immemorial, have shown a tendency to deep and anxious religious thoughts and exercises.* It was this national trait which gave such an impulse to Christianity on its first introduction into Great Britain; it was this which, a few centuries later, enabled the different orders of friars, who went from town to town preaching spiritualism with a vehement and popular eloquence, to rouse the people into enthusiasm, and sow deep and wide the seeds of their doctrines. When the teaching of religion had been organized into a system and settled by authority, there were constantly rising up men deeply impressed with the importance of religious truth, and earnest in the desire to please God, and make their own "calling and election sure."

Hence arose, at one time, the Lollards, at another the Gospellers, and finally the Puritans, who overturned the government, and brought about what is called the Reformation. In due time, these became divided into various sects, and in the last century, they, as well as the established church, seemed to have declined in religious spirit and fervor. The characteristic elements of the national character, though long suppressed, at last burst forth. Whit-

* See Penny Cyclopedia, article *Methodism*.

field, by his fiery eloquence, first ignited the spark, and disclosed the deep and glowing emotions which were kindling in the bosom of society. It was reserved, however, for Wesley, to give them full expression, and to combine into a permanent form, under the name of METHODISM, a church which should embody and perpetuate a new and startling development of religious feeling and experience.

The great characteristic of Methodism, at the outset, aside from its spiritual fervor, was, in the first place, that it addressed itself to the lower classes, and in the next, that it was chiefly propagated by illiterate preachers. Southey, in his Life of Wesley, gives us some amusing anecdotes, illustrative of this latter circumstance. Among these he describes a noted itinerant declaimer, who, being unable to read, employed his mother for that purpose. "She reads the text," said the orator, "and I 'splains and 'splounds." It was, in fact, the doctrine of these people at that day, which was also held by the early Baptists, that human learning is rather a hindrance and a snare to the preacher: that spiritual gifts and grace are indeed the only requisites. I remember to have heard an anecdote, applicable to this period, which is in point.

In one of his discourses, a gifted Poundtext, somewhere in Connecticut, addressed his audience in this wise: "What I insist upon, my brethren and sisters, is this: larnin isn't religion, and eddication don't give a man the power of the Spirit. It is grace and

gifts that furnish the rael live coals from off the altar. St. Peter was a fisherman—do you think he ever went to Yale College? Yet he was the rock upon which Christ built his Church. No, no, beloved brethren and sisters. When the Lord wanted to blow down the walls of Jericho, he didn't take a brass trumpet, or a polished French horn: no such thing; he took a ram's horn—a plain, natural ram's horn—just as it grew. And so, when he wants to blow down the walls of the spiritual Jericho, my beloved brethren and sisters, he don't take one of your smooth, polite, college larnt gentlemen, but a plain, natural ram's-horn sort of a man like me."

Thus, Methodism found its first impulse in a development of the inherent religious elements of the English character, rendered more explosive by long compression. It unquestionably derived aid in its beginning, also, from what was its reproach with its enemies—the use of illiterate propagandists—for it must be remembered that Methodism did not address itself to high places, but to the million. Many of its preachers possessed great natural eloquence, and their defects of grammar and rhetoric rather pleased than offended the rude audiences to whom they spoke. In recent times, political leaders, and promoters of various public objects, have found it convenient to take a hint from this portion of history.

It must be stated, furthermore, that the new sect

derived a sort of epidemic power from nervous or mesmeric phenomena which the ignorant deemed miraculous, and therefore divine. In the midst of agonizing prayers and preachings, individuals would fall down as in a swoon. These were immediately surrounded with persons, calling in impassioned tones upon the Holy Spirit, as if there personally present, to wash out their sins, and clothe them in the white robes of the Lamb of God. The subject of these solemn and agitating exercises, waking from his catalepsy, was saluted as having passed from death to life, from perdition to salvation! Then were poured out prayers of thanksgiving, and then all joined in hymns, set to plaintive and sentimental airs, many of them associated in the popular mind with the warm and tender emotions of youthful love and human affection. And these scenes often took place at night, in the midst of the forest, amid the glare of torches, the pageantry of processions, and the murmurs of a thousand voices, joining in a general anthem of agonizing prayers and shouting praises.

To a religious mind, every thing that tends to promote religion in the hearts of men, is apt to be regarded as distinct from the ordinary providence of God, yet it is difficult to prove even in such movements, that He ever proceeds without the use of means. The notice of these is the sphere of the historian, and therefore, not denying or disregarding the invisible influences of the divine Spirit,

I merely chronicle the open and tangible events of the time I refer to, with the machinery employed to produce them. The founders of Methodism did not disdain human means: nay, I suspect it will be difficult to find in the originators of any sect or creed, a more profound knowledge of human nature, or a more sedulous employment of human agencies, than are to be discovered in the early promoters of Methodism. Their camp-meetings, their love-feasts, their adaptation of popular airs to religious songs, their spirit of social fellowship, their use of the inferior arts of oratory, their employment of the intense enthusiasm of congregated masses, their promotion of cataleptic spasms to excite a feeling of supernatural awe in the people, were all calculated to produce precisely such effects as actually proceeded from them. It is neither necessary, nor is it philosophical, in explaining what is natural, to go beyond the known laws of nature. That God was in all this, we believe, but only as He is in all the other movements of human life, tending to work out human destiny. Who can doubt that the career of Washington, the soldier and statesman, was as much ordered by Providence as that of Wesley the divine?

We all know with what epidemic celerity Methodism spread over certain portions of England, especially among the masses of Bristol, Moorfields, Blackheath, Newcastle, and other places. Wesley began his mission in 1729: at his death, in 1791, after a

laborious life of sixty-five years, there were three hundred itinerant preachers, and a thousand local preachers, with eighty thousand persons, associated in societies, all belonging to his creed. This of course spread to America, but there was less immediate field for it here. Nevertheless, it was gradually extended, especially in the newly settled parts of the southern and western country. In Kentucky and Tennessee it was widely planted, and here it was attended with some of the most extraordinary phenomena* recorded in the history of the human mind. At

* These consisted of various manifestations, called the "*falling*," the "*jerking*," the "*rolling*," the "*dancing*," and the "*barking*" exercises, together with visions and trances. The latter were the most common; in these the subject was in a state of delicious mental revery, with a total suspension of muscular power and consciousness to external objects. In the jerks, the spasms were sometimes so violent as to induce the fear that those affected with them would dislocate their necks. Often the countenance was most disgustingly distorted. The first instance of this occurred at a sacrament in East Tennessee. These phenomena were most common with the Methodists, though people of other sects were attacked by them. The contagion even spread to Ohio, among the sober people of the Western Reserve.—*Howe's Great West*, p. 179.

Dow gives the following description in his journal, the period being in the early part of 1804, and the scenes of the events described, in Tennessee and Kentucky.

"I came to a house, and hired a woman to take me over the river in a canoe for my remaining money and a pair of scissors; the latter of which was the chief object with her: so one's extremities are others' opportunities. Thus with difficulty I got to my appointment in Newport, in time.

"I had heard about a singularity called the *jerks* or *jerking exercise*, which appeared first near Knoxville in August last, to the great alarm of the people; which reports at first I considered as vague and false; but at length, like the Queen of Sheba, I set out to go and see for myself, and sent over these appointments into this country accordingly.

"When I arrived in sight of the town, I saw hundreds of people collected in little bodies; and observing no place appointed for meet-

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the religious gatherings, whether in dwellings and churches or in the open woods and fields, persons would be suddenly taken with certain irresistible spasms, inciting them to the most strange and extravagant performances. Some would bark like dogs, and attempt to climb the trees, declaring that they were treeing the devil. Some had delicious trances; others danced as if beset with sudden frenzy; others still were

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ing, before I spoke to any, I got on a log and gave out a hymn, which caused them to assemble round, in a solemn, attentive silence. I observed several involuntary motions in the course of the meeting, which I considered as a specimen of the jerks. I rode several miles behind a man across a stream of water, and held meeting in the evening, being ten miles on my way.

"In the night I grew uneasy, being twenty-five miles from my appointment for next Monday at eleven o'clock. I prevailed upon a young man to attempt carrying me with horses until day, which he thought was impracticable, considering the darkness of the night and the thickness of the trees. Solitary shrieks were heard in these woods, which he told me were the cries of murdered persons. At day we parted, being still seventeen miles from the spot; and the ground covered with a white frost. I had not proceeded far before I came to a stream of water from the springs of the mountain, which made it dreadful cold. In my heated state I had to wade this stream five times in the course of about an hour, which I perceived so affected my body that my strength began to fail. Fears began to arise that I must disappoint the people, till I observed some fresh tracks of horses, which caused me to exert every nerve to overtake them, in hopes of aid or assistance on my journey, and soon I saw them on an eminence. I shouted for them to stop till I came up. They inquired what I wanted; I replied, I had heard there was a meeting at Seversville by a stranger, and was going to it. They replied that they had heard that a crazy man was to hold forth there, and were going also; and perceiving that I was weary, they invited me to ride; and soon our company was increased to forty or fifty, who fell in with us on the road from different plantations. At length I was interrogated whether I knew any thing about the preacher. I replied, I had heard a good deal about him, and had heard him preach, but had no great opinion of him; and thus the conversation continued for some miles before they found me out, which caused some color and smiles in the company. Thus I got on to meeting, and after taking

agitated by violent and revolting convulsions and twitchings, which obtained the popular name of the *jerks*. All classes of persons who came within the atmosphere of the mania—Methodists, Presbyterians, and Quakers—men and women—became subjects of these extraordinary agitations. I recollect to have heard the late Thomas H. Gallaudet say that, when a young man, he visited one of the meetings where these phe-

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a cup of tea, gratis, I began to speak to a vast audience: and I observed about thirty to have the *jerks*, though they strove to keep as still as they could. These emotions were involuntary and irresistible, as any unprejudiced eye might discern. Lawyer Porter (who had come a considerable distance) got his heart touched under the word, and being informed how I came to meeting, voluntarily lent me a horse to ride near one hundred miles, and gave me a dollar, though he had never seen me before.

"Hence to Marysville, where I spoke to about one thousand five hundred: many appeared to feel the word, but about fifty felt the *jerks*. At night I lodged with one of the *Nicholites*, a kind of Quakers, who do not feel free to wear colored clothes. I spoke to a number of people at his house that night. Whilst at tea, I observed his daughter (who sat opposite to me at the table) to have the *jerks*, and dropped the tea-cup from her hand in violent agitation. I said to her, 'Young woman, what is the matter?' She replied, 'I have got the *jerks*.' I asked her how long she had it. She observed, 'A few days,' and that it had been the means of the awakening and conversion of her soul, by stirring her up to serious consideration about her careless state, &c.

"Sunday, Feb. 19, I spoke in Knoxville, to hundreds more than could get into the court-house—the governor being present. About one hundred and fifty appeared to have jerking exercise, among whom was a circuit preacher (Johnson), who had opposed them a little before, but he now had them powerfully; and I believe he would have fallen over three times, had not the auditory been so crowded, that he could not, unless he fell perpendicularly.

"After meeting, I rode eighteen miles to hold meeting at night. The people of this settlement were mostly Quakers, and they had said, as I was informed, that 'the Methodists and Presbyterians have the *jerks* because they *sing* and *pray* so much; but we are a still, peaceable people, wherefore we do not have them;' however, about twenty of them came to meeting, to hear one, as was said, somewhat in a Quaker line.

nomena were taking place, and that he felt within himself an almost uncontrollable temptation to imitate some of the strange antics that were going on around him.

Nor did all this—so calculated as it was to excite public curiosity, and to produce in the minds of the ignorant a superstitious idea that there must be something supernatural in a religion that led to such

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But their usual stillness and silence was interrupted, for about a dozen of them had the *jerks* as keen and as powerful as any I had seen, so as to have occasioned a kind of grunt or groan when they would jerk. It appears that many have undervalued the Great Revival, and attempted to account for it altogether on natural principles; therefore it seems to me, from the best judgment I can form, that God hath seen proper to take this method to convince people that he will work in a way to show his power, and sent the *jerks* as a sign of the times, partly in judgment for the people's unbelief, and yet as a mercy to convict people of divine realities.

"I have seen Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, Baptists, Church of England, and Independents, exercised with the *jerks*. Gentleman and lady, black and white, the aged and the youth, rich and poor, without exception; from which I infer, as it can not be accounted for on natural principles, and carries such marks of involuntary motion, that it is no trifling matter. I believe that they who were the most pious and given up to God are rarely touched with it; and also those naturalists, who wish and try to get it to philosophize upon it, are excepted; but the lukewarm, lazy, half-hearted, indolent professor, is subject to it, and many of them I have seen, who, when it came upon them, would be alarmed, and stirred up to redouble their diligence with God, and after they would get happy, were thankful that it ever came upon them. Again, the wicked are frequently more afraid of it than the small-pox or yellow fever. These are subject to it; but the persecutors are more subject to it than any, and they sometimes have cursed and swore and damned it, whilst jerking. There is no pain attending the jerks except they resist them, which, if they do, it will weary them more in an hour than a day's labor, which shows that it requires the consent of the will to avoid suffering.

"I passed by a meeting-house, where I observed the undergrowth had been cut up for a camp-meeting, and from fifty to one hundred saplings left breast high, which to me appeared so slovenish that I could not but

results—constitute the whole of the machinery of Methodism, at this period. Some of the preachers seemed to be impelled in their orbits—if not as swift, certainly more eccentric than those of the comets — by a zeal, an energy, an enthusiasm, which some kind of inspiration alone could create. The wandering priests of Buddhism—who traverse mountains and rivers, seas, islands, and continents, with a restlessness which knows no abatement; the Mohammedan friars that profess to work miracles, and in evidence of their powers, spin round and round till they fall fainting upon the floor; the Brahmins, who rush under the wheels of Juggernaut, or cause themselves to be suspended by irons hooked into the muscles of the back, and then whirled round in the

ask my guide the cause, who observed they were topped so high, and left for the people to jerk by. This so excited my attention that I went over the ground to view it, and found, where the people had laid hold of them and jerked so powerfully, that they had kicked up the earth as a horse stamping flies. I observed some emotion both this day and night among the people. A Presbyterian minister (with whom I stayed) observed, 'Yesterday, whilst I was speaking, some had the jerks, and a young man from North Carolina mimicked them out of derision, and soon was seized with them himself (which was the case with many others). He grew ashamed, and on attempting to mount his horse to go off, his foot jerked about so that he could not put it into the stirrup. Some youngsters seeing this, assisted him on, but he jerked so that he could not sit alone, and one got up to hold him on, which was done with difficulty. I observing this, went to him, and asked him what he thought of it. Said he, "I believe God sent it on me for my wickedness, and making light of it in others," and he requested me to pray for him.'

"I observed his wife had it; she said she was first attacked in bed. Dr. Nelson had frequently strove to get it (in order to philosophize about it), but he could not; and observed they could not account for it on natural principles."

air from a long pole ;—these were all rivaled, if not outdone, by the indomitable zeal of some of the preachers and propagators of Methodism at this period.

The most conspicuous of these was the noted Lorenzo Dow.* He was a native of Connecticut, and at the period of my boyhood had begun to be talked about chiefly on account of his eccentricities—though he was also a man of some talent. About the time

* Methodism was first introduced into America about the year 1766. In 1771, the celebrated Francis Asbury came over from England, and preached here. He was followed by Dr. Coke in 1784, and in that year the Methodist Church in America was duly organized. The two individuals just mentioned, were men of education, talent, zeal, and piety, and to their earnest and untiring labors, the rapid spread of the society may be chiefly attributed. Asbury, who was constituted senior bishop in the United States, in the course of his ministry ordained three thousand ministers, and preached seventeen thousand sermons !

Among the extraordinary incidents in the history of Methodism, we may note the following :

"Last year (1799) was celebrated for the commencement of those Great Revivals in Religion in the Western Country, which induced the practice of holding camp-meetings. This work commenced under the united labors of two brothers by the name of McGee, one a Presbyterian and the other a Methodist preacher. On one occasion, William McGee felt such a power come over him, that he seemed not to know what he did ; so he left his seat and sat down on the floor, while John sat trembling under the consciousness of the power of God. In the mean time there was great solemnity and weeping all over the house. He was expected to preach, but instead of that, he arose and told the people that the overpowering nature of his feelings would not allow of his preaching, but as the Lord was evidently among them, he earnestly exhorted the people to surrender their hearts to him. Sobs and cries bespoke the deep feeling which pervaded the hearts of the people. This great and earnest work excited such attention, that the people came in crowds from the surrounding country, and this was the beginning of that great revival in religion in the western country which introduced camp-meetings. This novel mode of worshiping God excited great attention. In the night the grove was illuminated by lighted candles, lamps, or torches. This, together with the stillness of the night, the solemnity which rested on every countenance, the peculiar and earnest manner in which the preach-

that Methodism began to spread itself in Connecticut, Dow appeared in Ridgefield, and taking a stand on 'Squire Nathan Smith's wood-pile, held forth to a few boys and other people that chanced to be in that quarter. I was returning from school, and stopped to hear his discourse. He was then about thirty years of age, but looked much older. He was thin and weather-beaten, and appeared haggard and ill-

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ers exhorted the people to repentance, prayer, and faith, produced the most awful sensations on the minds of all present."

"At a meeting held in Cabin Creek, the work seemed to bear down all opposition. Few, if any, escaped from it; such as attempted to run from it were frequently struck down in the way. On the third night so many fell (that is, in cataleptic swoons), that to prevent their being trodden under feet, they were collected together, and laid out in two squares of the meeting-house. At the great meeting at Cambridge, the number that fell was named at over three thousand!"—*Bangs' History of Methodism*, vol. ii. p. 108.

The following will give some idea of the men and manners connected with Methodism at this era:

"Calvin Wooster was a man of mighty prayer and faith. Nor was he alone in this work. The other preachers caught the flame of divine love, and were carried forward, under its sacred influence, in their Master's work. Many instances of the manifestations of Divine power and grace might be narrated, one of which I will relate. At a quarterly meeting in the Bay of Quinte circuit (Upper Canada, A. D. 1799), as the preacher commenced his sermon, a thoughtless man in the front gallery commenced in a playful mood to swear profanely, and thus to disturb the congregation. The preacher paid no attention to him, until he was in the midst of his sermon, when feeling strong in faith and the power of his might, suddenly stopping, he fixed his piercing eyes on the profane man; then stamping his foot, and pointing his finger at him, with great energy he cried out, '*My God, smite him!*' He instantly fell, as if shot through the heart with a bullet. At this moment such a divine afflatus came down upon the congregation, that sinners were crying to God for mercy in every direction, while the saints of God burst forth in loud praises to His name."—*Bangs' History of Methodism*, vol. ii. p. 74.

We now come to Lorenzo Dow.

This person was born at Coventry, Connecticut, in 1777. In his "*Exemplified Experience, or Lorenzo's Journal*," he says: "One day,

favored, partly on account of his reddish, dusty beard, some six inches long—then a singularity if not an enormity, as nobody among us but old Jagger the beggar cultivated such an appendage. I did not comprehend what he said, and only remember his general appearance. He was merely passing through Ridgefield, and soon departed, having produced the impression that he was an odd sort of person, and rather

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when I was between three and four years old, I suddenly fell into a revery about God and those places called Heaven and Hell, so that I forgot my play, and asked my companion if he ever said his prayers. He said no. 'Then,' said I, 'you are wicked, and I will not play with you;' so I quit his company, and went into the house." Afterwards, having killed a bird, he became distressed in mind, and wished he had never been born. Still later he had a dream, in which he saw the prophet Nathan, who told him that he would die at the age of twenty-two. In 1791 he saw John Wesley in a dream, which induced him to change his ways, and enter on a religious life. "Soon," he says, "I became like a speckled bird among the birds of the forest, in the eyes of my friends."

After various mental agonies he took to preaching, and up to the time of his death, which occurred at Georgetown, District of Columbia, in 1834, he traveled and preached with a restlessness perhaps without parallel in human history. He not only visited repeatedly almost every part of the United States, but England and Ireland, everywhere addressing such audiences as came in his way. Sometimes he spoke from a stump, or rock, or fallen tree in the wildnesses; sometimes in private houses, sometimes in religious edifices, sometimes on the platforms of camp-meetings. Few men have ever traveled so many miles: no one, probably, ever preached to so great a number of persons.

His Journal, above mentioned, is a very curious, though quaint and affected, record of his experience and adventures. He appears to have been actuated by a desire of moving on and on, fearing no danger, and overcoming every obstacle. He must preach or die, and he must preach in new places and to new audiences. He seems to have considered himself as urged by a divine enthusiasm to preach the Gospel. The shrewd observer will think he was quite as anxious to preach Lorenzo Dow. He evidently had a large share of personal vanity: his spirit was aggressive, and attacks upon other sects constituted a large part of his preaching. In one instance he was prosecuted for libel upon a clergyman, and being

light-headed. I afterward heard him preach twice at camp-meetings, and will endeavor to give you some idea of his manner. The following is a passage, as nearly as I can recollect, his general discourse being aimed at those who accused the Methodists of being New Lights—a mere set of enthusiasts.

"Now, my friends, you all know we are called New Lights. It is said that we have in us a false fire which throws out a glare only to mislead and deceive the people. They say we are actuated by the spirit of the devil, instead of the spirit of religion. Well, no matter what they say; no matter what they call us: the question is, whether we have the real fire or the false fire? I say we have got the true fire, and the old Church-and-State Presbyterians have got the false fire. That's what I say, and I'll prove it.

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convicted was imprisoned for a short time. He resorted to various artifices to excite the curiosity of the public, and thus to increase his audiences. His doctrines were those of the Methodists, and he generally associated with Methodist congregations: still, he never formally became a member of that communion. Though he had the weaknesses and vices above suggested, he is generally regarded, on the whole, as a sincere and religious man. His character is, however, not to be commended, for infidelity thrives upon foibles, eccentricities, artifices, and vulgarities, in one who assumes to be a preacher of the Gospel. Such things may catch a few thoughtless minds, but the reflecting—those who will exert a wide and lasting influence—will be apt to point to them as evidence that religion is the offspring of ignorance and fanaticism, played upon by charlatans and pretenders.

Peggy Dow, Lorenzo's wife, seems to have had a great admiration of her husband, and to have shared in his religious zeal, without partaking of his vices of manner and mind. On the whole, her character happily displays the feminine characteristics of warm affection, devotion, and that charity which covers a multitude of sins and weaknesses.

"There is in nater, no doubt, as well as in religion, both false fire and true fire: the first is rotten-wood, which shines in the night. You often see it among the roots and trunks of old decayed trees. But you may pile it up as high as a haystack, and it won't make a pot boil. Now ain't that like the old sleepy, decayed Presbyterians? But as to the true fire—if you take a few kindlings, and put 'em under a kittle, and put some water in the kittle, and then set the kindlings on fire, you'll see something, won't you? Well: what will you see? Why the water begins to wallop and wallop and wallop! Well, suppose you had never seen water bile before—you'd say the devil was in it, wouldn't you? Of course you would. Now, it is just so with this carnal generation—the old school, the rotten-wood, the false-fire people—they see us moved with the true fire of religion, and they say the devil's in it—because they never saw it before, and don't understand it. Thus it is they call us New Lights. No wonder, for they have nothing but false fire in their hearts!"

Lorenzo was not only uncouth in his person and appearance, but his voice was harsh, his action hard and rectangular. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a person more entirely destitute of all natural eloquence. But he understood common life, and especially vulgar life — its tastes, prejudices, and weaknesses; and he possessed a cunning knack of adapting his discourses to such audiences. He told

stories with considerable art, and his memory being stored with them, he could always point a moral or clinch a proposition by an anecdote. He knew that with simple people an illustration is better than logic, and when he ran short of Scripture, or argument failed, he usually resorted to some pertinent story or adapted allegory. He affected oddity in all things—in his mode of preaching as well as in dress. He took pains to appear suddenly and by surprise among the people where he proposed to hold forth: he frequently made his appointments a year beforehand, and at the very minute set, he would come like an apparition. He often took scraps of texts, and extracted from them, by a play upon words, an unexpected argument or startling inference. His endeavor seemed to be to exercise an influence over the imagination by associating himself in the minds of the people with John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness, and living on locusts and wild honey. His special admirers saw great merit in his oddities, and even in his long shaggy *goat*. By the vain world of that day, this was deemed beastly—for then foppery had not taken the beard as its type and its glory. It was thirty years later, that I saw an American among the fashionable circles of Paris, and who had his reddish hair and beard dressed like Christ in Raphael's pictures—very much petted by the French ladies, who thought him so like our Saviour!

At the time of which I am writing, one of the great points of dispute between Methodism and Orthodoxy was that of "Falling from Grace:" the former taking the affirmative and the latter the negative. The infirmities of human nature, sometimes visible in the Elect, furnished abundant and laughter-moving weapons against the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. The apostle Peter, who had denied his Lord and Master under circumstances which made his conduct appear in the highest degree craven and cowardly, furnished a standing argument for the preachers of Methodism. The scandals of deacons and priests in the orthodox church, were picked up and thrown into the argument with more wit than delicacy. In this coarse, Parthian warfare, Lorenzo was an adept—and he seemed to take as much delight in provoking the ribald mirth of the mocker of all religion, as in controverting ecclesiastical error in the mind of the sincere inquirer. It is true that, in private, the orthodox sometimes paid back and perhaps with interest, for the Methodists claimed to attain spiritual perfection. It was not difficult to find cases in which their practice jarred a little with their pretenses. The Methodists had the advantage, however, for their preachers introduced these topics in their discourses, often making pointed and personal attacks the pepper and salt of their harangues—while the more stately orthodox usually confined their discussions to private circles, or perhaps general and dignified notices in

their sermons. On one occasion, Dow illustrated his views on the subject of "Falling from Grace," somewhat as follows, his text being a part of the verse, Heb. ii. 1: "*Lest at any time we should let them slip.*"

"Now, my brethren," said Dow—when he had stated and enlarged upon his argument—"let me take a case, and a very likely one to happen. Nay, I'm not at all sure that it hain't happened, and not a hundred miles off. Well, here is Major Smith, who becomes convarted. He joins the church, and is safe as a codfish, pickled, packed, and in port. Of course his calling and election are sure. He can't let 'em slip. He can't fall from grace—not he! Don't be too certain of that, my brethren! Don't be too sure of that, major!

"I say nothing agin the character of Major Smith, mind you. He is a very fair sort of a man, as the world goes. Nevertheless, they du say that he was in the habit of taking, now and then, a glass or two more than was good for him. He was fond of a warm gin toddy, especially of a cold day, for he was subject to wind on the stomach; and then, in order to settle his toddy, he would take a glass of flip, and then to settle his flip, he'd take a glass of toddy, agin. These he usually took in the arternoon and at Northrup's tavern.

"But, as I say, one day Major Smith was convarted, and taken into the church, and so he must reform.

He must give up toddy and flip, and Northrup's tavern. And he has gin them all up—for he is parfeckly sincere—mind you. Well, some weeks later, on the arternoon of a cold blustering day in December, he happens to be passing by Northrup's tavern. Just at that time, as the devil will have it—for the devil is always looking out for a chance—his old friend and bottle companion, Nate Seymour, comes to the door, and sees the major. Well, the latter rides up, and they shake hands, and talk over the news, and finally Nate says, 'Won't you come in a minute, major?'

"Now, as I tell you, it's a cold winter's day, and the major says he'll jest get down, and warm his fingers. He won't drink any thing of course, but he thinks it best not to break all at once with his old friends, for they may say he's proud. Perhaps he'll have a chance to say a word in season to some one. So he goes in, and, as it happens, Nate jest then puts the red-hot poker into a mug of flip. How it bubbles and simmers and foams! What a nice odor it does send forth into the room! And jest then the landlord grates in a little nutmeg. What a pleasant sound is that to poor, shivering human nater, on a cold day in December!

"Well, Nate takes it and hands it to the major. The major says to himself, 'I'll just put it to my lips, so as not to seem frumptious and unreasonable, but I won't drink any.' So he takes it, and it feels mighty warm and nice to his cold fingers. He looks at it;

its fumes rise to his nostrils; he remembers the joys of other days; he puts it to his lips!

"Well, and what then? Oh nothing, my brethren—only I tell you, that elect or no elect, that is a very slippery spot for the major!"

The effect of this upon an audience to whom such language was adapted, especially as it all referred to a well-known person, who, after being taken into the church, had backslidden to his old habits, may be easily appreciated. Who could argue down such telling logic with the million?

For a considerable time the Methodists made few converts in Ridgefield, but they planted themselves in the neighboring towns, and soon their numbers were sufficient to hold camp-meetings in various quarters. At length, Dr. Baker, a respectable physician of our village, became imbued with the rising spirit, and he began to hold meetings in his kitchen. Here there was praying, and exhorting, and telling experiences, and singing sentimental airs to warm and sentimental religious hymns. The neighbors gathered in, and soon it was noised abroad that a great work was going on. Various passions were insensibly wrought upon to swell the movement: curiosity was gratified by something new and strange; the love of the dramatic, implanted in every bosom, was delighted with scenes in which men and women stood up and told how the Lord had brought them from death unto life: the tender melodies touched and melted many hearts;

the sympathy of young men and young maidens was titillated; the love of fellowship between man and man was flattered; and all these varying emotions seemed to be melted into one warm, flowing current of religion, sanctified by the presence of the Holy Spirit! How curious are the workings of the human heart! how much of earth is often mingled in with what claims to breathe of heaven!

I cast no reproaches upon these persons: Dr. Baker was a true and worthy man, and among his associates were several excellent people. I do not deny that in the end much good was done; that the thoughtless, the frivolous, the vain, and in some cases the wicked and the debased, were drawn, even through these means, to religious convictions and a religious life. Still, these things were looked upon as a vain and delusive mania, or perhaps even the work of the Evil One, by the world around, and especially by those of the established creed. Nevertheless, the movement spread, and at last became epidemic. Some of my father's flock strayed from the fold, and became the spoil of the enemy. One or two of his staunch church members saw new light in the horizon of their religion. A little short man, up at the North End, who had a fine treble voice and a tall wife with the throat of a trumpet, but who was withal one of the pillars of the church—came to our house, bringing the said wife on a pillion, both charged with Lorenzo Dow's true fire. Therefore, they lifted up their voices

and testified to my father that a new era had come, and that it was time for him and his people to wake up from their slumbers, which boded death and destruction to their souls!

The precise scene I do not remember. I have only a general recollection of the deep anxiety of both my parents about this time. A cloud was on their hearts and their countenances, by day and night. The deacons were called in, and there were profound consultations as to what was to be done. The neighboring clergy were consulted, and it was soon discovered that they, too, were beset by the same dangers. In some cases, their people joined the Methodists; in others, they imitated them by evening meetings for prayer and mutual exhortation. The very air at last seemed impregnated with the electric fluid. Not only men of a religious turn seemed in a state of unusual excitement, but the cold, the careless, the worldly, began to ask, What shall we do to be saved? Attempts were made in some places to preach down the rising tempest as an illusion. Parson Elliot, of Fairfield, gave it battle, as I have stated, declaring that in religion, as well as in the affairs of life, a steady, tranquil devotion was better than sudden and irregular storms of fervor.

Nevertheless, the movement could not be arrested. My father, who was, I think, a far-seeing man, did not attempt to breast the shock. He took a wiser course. He adopted evening meetings, first at the

church, and afterward at private houses. No doubt, also, he put more fervor into his Sabbath discourses. Deacons and laymen, gifted in speech, were called upon to pray and exhort, and tell experiences in the private meetings, which were now called *conferences*. A revival of religious spirit arose even among the orthodox. Their religious meetings soon became animated, and were speedily crowded with interested worshipers or eager lookers-on. At the same time, the church was newly shingled and freshly painted; the singing choir was regenerated; the lagging salary of my father was paid up, and as winter approached, his full twenty cords of wood were furnished by his people according to the contract.

And yet the wolf was all the while stealing the sheep! Nevertheless, my father's church increased, and at the same time the dreaded Methodists converted a large number of the idle, dissipated, and irreligious, who had become, like Ephraim of old, so joined to idols, that there seemed no other way than to let them alone. But for Methodism, this had undoubtedly been their fate. And thus what seemed a mania, wrought regeneration; thus orthodoxy was in a considerable degree methodized, and Methodism in due time became orthodoxed. Years passed on, and now there are two bright places of worship in Ridgefield; one Methodist and one Congregational, and both filled with worshipers. The people of the latter consist for the most part of the staid, sober, and

middle-aged class: those of the former—though the church had its rise in a kitchen—comprise many respectable citizens, with a full proportion of the gentler sex, who comprehend and employ the advantages of coquettish French bonnets, trimmed with wreaths of artificial flowers! Moreover, the clergymen of the two churches exchange with each other, and the professors of both are mutually admitted to the communion tables. Let us never judge too harshly of any movement, which, though it may develop some frailties, has evidently a religious basis. Folly, affectation, vulgarity, are always fit objects of ridicule, even when clothed in a sanctimonious garb, but in letting our arrows fly at vice, we should ever be scrupulous not to wound virtue.

LETTER XVI.

The Three Deacons.

My dear C******

It may be amusing, perhaps profitable, to give here a few sketches of the remarkable characters of Ridgefield, at the opening of the present century. Some were types of their time; others, however eccentric, were exemplifications of our race and our society, influenced by peculiar circumstances, and showing into what fashions this stuff of humanity

may be wrought. They were, moreover, among the monuments that are still prominent in my recollection, and seem to me an essential part of the social landscape which encircled my youth.

I begin with the three deacons of my father's parish. First was Deacon Olmstead, full threescore years and ten at the opening of the present century. His infancy touched upon the verge of Puritanism—the days of Increase and Cotton Mather. The spirit of the Puritans lived in his heart, while the semblance of the patriarchs lingered in his form. He was fully six feet high, with broad shoulders, powerful limbs, and the august step of a giant. His hair was white, and rolled in thin curls upon his shoulders: he was still erect, though he carried a long cane, like that of father Abraham in the old pictures, representing him at the head of his kindred and his camels, going from the land of Haran to the land of Canaan. Indeed, he was my personification of the great progenitor of the Hebrews; and when my father read from the twelfth chapter of Genesis, how he and Lot and their kindred journeyed forth, I half fancied it must be Deacon Olmstead under another name.

I know not if there be such men now—so grand, yet so simple; so wise, yet so good; so proud, yet so meek and lowly. It is doubtless the cant of each generation in its age and decrepitude, to degrade the present and magnify the past, perhaps because the heart is a little jaded and sickened with the disappointments

which press heavily upon it, and naturally turns with disgust at these, to bestow a kind of worship upon the shades which stalk along the distant horizon of youthful remembrances. Perhaps there is also something more personal and selfish in this process, for vanity often lingers even in the wreck of our existence. Thus an old man tottering to the grave, not unfrequently boasts of the feats he performed in his youth; and the aged dame—gray, wrinkled, and paralytic—parades the charms of her maidenhood. A vain conceit, a swelling self-appreciation, often mingle themselves unconsciously in our thoughts, and as we cannot boast of the present, which is sliding from us, we find relief and satisfaction in glorifying the past, which we still claim as our own. And again, in age, we are no doubt liable to self-deception, from looking backward over an extended view, and taking the things which rise up like monuments above all around them, as the representatives of their day and generation, while in fact they are only their exceptions and marvels.

At all events, there is an impression, I think, that the great men of the past century in New England have not their representatives in the present generation, especially in personal appearance and character; yet it is probable that our race is not really degenerated either in its physical or moral standard. There was something stately, no doubt, in the costume of the olden time: there was also a corresponding air of starchness in the carriage. A cocked hat and

powdered wig made it necessary for a man to demean himself warily, like an Italian porter who carries a tub of water upon his head. Thus guised, even little Dr. Marsh,* of Wethersfield, whom I remember in his antique costume, was quite a portly gentleman. The long powdered queues, the small-clothes and knee-buckles, the white-top boots and silk stockings, with the majestic tread of a Humphries, a Daggett, or a Dana—who flourished forty or fifty years ago in the high places of Connecticut—no doubt made these leaders of society look like the born lords of creation. In comparison, the simple short-cropped, pantalooned gentlemen, who now fill the same, or similar stations—the T.....'s, E.....'s, and S....'s—may seem a degenerate race. Yet if you subject these to any positive test—though it must be admitted that manners have lost something of their polish and much

* Rev. John Marsh, D.D., of Wethersfield, was the last of the Connecticut clergy to give up the wig. I have often seen him in it, though he left it off a short time before his death. Once, when he was on a journey, he stopped overnight at a tavern. On going to bed, he took off his wig and hung it up. A servant maid happened to see it, and ran down in great terror to her mistress, saying, "Ma'am, that minister has took off his head and hung it up on a nail!"

For many years he was accustomed to mount his old chaise and set off with Mrs. Marsh to attend the annual commencement at Cambridge College. Everybody knew him along the road, and bowing, as he passed, said, "How d'ye do, Dr. Marsh?" At last he dismissed his wig; but now, as he went along, nobody recognized him. It was evident that his wig was necessary to insure the accustomed and grateful salute: so, on his journeys to commencement ever after, he put it on, though he discarded it at other times. He died A. D. 1820, aged 79.

Dr. Marsh was a man of great learning and politeness and high respectability. The Rev. John Marsh, now of New York, the distinguished advocate of the cause of temperance, is his son.

of their dignity—they will doubtless be found to be about as tall and as talented, and perhaps as virtuous as their predecessors. At the same time, I suspect it will be also discovered that the great mass of society is elevated in many things above the corresponding portions of the community in the early days of which I speak.

But be this as it may, there is no doubt that Deacon Olmstead was in all things a noble specimen of humanity—an honor to human nature—a shining light in the Church. I have spoken of him as having something grand about him, yet I remember how kindly he condescended to take me, a child, on his knee, and how gently his great brawny fingers encircled my infant hand. I have said he was wise; yet his book learning was small, though it might have been as great as that of Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob. He knew indeed the Bible by heart, and that is a great teacher. He had also lived long, and profited by observation and experience. Above all, he was calm, just, sincere, and it is wonderful how these lamps light up the path of life. I have said he was proud, yet it was only toward the seductions of the world: to these he was hard and stern: to his God, he was simple, obedient, and docile as a child: toward his kindred and his neighbor, toward the poor, toward the suffering—though not so soft—he was sympathetic as a sister of charity.

Some men seem to imagine that the heart should

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grow alien to man as it draws nigh to God; that piety, burning brightly, dims, if it does not extinguish, the lamp of love and friendship and social impulses. They look upon religion as the serpent of Moses, and human affections as the snakes of the Egyptian priests, and in their view the former should destroy and devour the latter. It was not so with this noble old man. His Christianity did not take from the stature of his humanity. It was, indeed, as a Christian that his character was most distinctly marked; yet he was no ascetic, for he enjoyed life and its comforts: he did not disdain its wealth—he toiled for it and obtained it. He lived —as a man, a father, a member of society—a large and generous life, for he had a large and generous nature. Had this been all, he would still have passed to his grave beloved and honored; but there was much more. His religion was large, grand, imposing, like his person. He believed with such a clear, manly faith, that as he walked abroad, you felt that God and eternity were realities to him—and by irresistible influence, they became realities to you —like the sun and the earth. When you heard him pray—as I have often done—you *knew* that God was there. How sublime is such a man living such a life, even though he was but a simple country farmer!

I must now present a somewhat different portrait—that of Deacon John Benedict. He was a worthy old man, and enjoyed many claims to respect. He was not only a deacon, but a justice of the peace; moreover,

he was the father of Aunt Delight—of whom I desire ever to speak with reverence. She, not being a beauty, was never married, and hence, having no children of her own, she combed and crammed the heads of other people's children. In this way she was eminently useful in her day and generation. The Deacon respected the law, especially as it was administered in his own person. He was severe upon those who violated the statutes of the State, but one who violated the statutes of Deacon John Benedict committed the unpardonable sin. He was the entire police of the meeting-house on Sunday, and not a boy or girl, or even a bumblebee, could offend, without condign punishment.

Nevertheless, the Deacon is said in one case—rather before my time—to have met his match. There was in the village a small, smart, nervous woman, with a vigorous clack, which, once set going, was hard to stop. One day she was at church, and having carried her dinner of mince-pie in a little cross-handled basket, she set it down under the seat. In the midst of sermon-time, a small dog came into the pew, and getting behind her petticoats, began to devour the pie. She heard what was going on, and gave him a kick. Upon this the dog backed out with a yelp, but bringing the dinner basket hung across his neck, with him. Back, back he went, tail first, across the pew into the broad aisle.

"Oh dear!" said the woman, in a shrill voice—"the dog's got my dinner! There! I've spoken loud

in meeting-time! What will Deacon Benedict say? Why! I'm talking all the time. There it goes agin. What shall I du?"

"Hold your tongue!" said the Deacon, who was in his official seat, fronting the explosion. These words operated like a charm, and the nervous lady was silent. The next day Deacon John appeared at the house of the offender, carrying a calf-bound volume in his hand. The woman gave one glance at the book, and one at the Deacon. That was enough: it spoke volumes, and the man of the law returned home, and never mentioned the subject afterward. This is the whole of the story as it was reported to me in my youth.

Deacon Hawley was very unlike either of his two associates whom I have described. He was younger, and of a peculiarly mild and amiable temper. His countenance wore a tranquil and smooth expression. His hair was fine and silky, and lay, as if oiled, close to his head. He had a soft voice, and an ear for music. He was a cabinet-maker by trade, a chorister by choice, a deacon by the vote of the church, a Christian by the grace of God. In each of these things he found his place, as if designed for it by nature and Providence.

How easily did life flow on for him! How different was its peaceful current, from the battle waged by Granther Baldwin—whom I shall soon describe—from the beginning, and ceasing only when death put

his cold finger on the heart and silenced it forever. Oh nature! thou art a powerful divinity, sometimes moulding the heart in love and charity, and sometimes as if in bitterness and spite. Let those who become the judges of man here below, make due allowance for these things, as no doubt the Judge hereafter will consider them in adjusting each man's account.

In worldly affairs as well as spiritual, Deacon Hawley's path was straight and even: he was successful in business, beloved in society, honored in the church. Exceedingly frugal by habit and disposition, he still loved to give in charity, though he told not the world of it. When he was old, his family being well provided for, he spent much of his time in casting about to find opportunities of doing good. Once he learned that a widow, who had been in good circumstances, was struggling with poverty. He was afraid to offer money as charity, for fear of wounding her pride—the more sensitive, perhaps, because of her change of condition. He therefore intimated that he owed a debt of fifty dollars to her late husband, and wished to pay it to her.

"And how was that?" said the lady, somewhat startled.

"I will tell you," said the Deacon. "About five and twenty years ago, soon after you were married, I made some furniture for your husband—to the amount of two hundred dollars. I have been look-

ing over the account, and find that I rather overcharged him, in the price of some chairs; that is, I could have afforded them at somewhat less. I have added up the interest, and here, madam, is the money."

The widow listened, and, as she suspected the truth, the tears came to her eyes. The Deacon comprehended all in an instant: he did not pause to reply, but laid the money on the table and departed.

Another trait of this good man was his patriotism. The prosperity of the country seemed always to be in his heart—a source of gratification to himself and a cause of thanksgiving to God. His conversation, his prayers, were full of these sentiments. Though of moderate intellectual gifts, his temper was so even, his desires so just, that his judgment was almost infallible; and hence he exercised a large, though quiet and unseen influence upon other men. It is strange, in this world, to see a man who always and under all circumstances, seems to have as his master motive—the wish to do just right. Yet such a man was Deacon Hawley.*

I know not how it is, but the term *deacon* is associated in many minds with a certain littleness, and especially a sort of affectation, a cant in conversation, an I-am-holier-than-thou air and manner. I remember Deacon C.... of H...., who deemed it proper

* See note I. p. 519.

to become scriptural, and to talk as much as possible like Isaiah. He was in partnership with his son Laertes, and they sold crockery and furniture. One day a female customer came, and the old gentleman being engaged, went to call his son, who was in the loft above. Placing himself at the foot of the stairs, he said, attuning his voice to the occasion, "La-ar-tes, descend—a lady waits!" Deacon C.... sought to signalize himself by a special respect to the ways of Providence: so he refused to get insurance against fire, declaring that if the Lord wished to burn down his house or his barn, he should submit without a murmur. He pretended to consider thunder and lightning and conflagrations as special acts of the Almighty, and it was distrusting Providence to attempt to avert their effects. Deacon Hawley had none of these follies or frailties. Though a deacon, he was still a man; though aspiring to heaven, he lived cheerily on earth; though a Christian, he was a father, a neighbor, and, according to his rank in life, a gentleman, having in all things the feelings and manners appropriate to each of these relations.

This good man is not living: he died not many years since at the age of ninety-one, enjoying to the last good health, and that tranquillity of mind and body sometimes vouchsafed to the aged after the heat and burden of active life. I look back upon his memory as a strip of sunshine bursting from the clouds, and falling upon the landscape of life, to make us feel

that there is light in the world, and that every man—even those of humble capacity and humble position—may possess it, use it, glorify and disseminate it. Such a life indeed tends to rob existence of its bitterness, and to give dignity to man and glory to God!

LETTER XVII.

The Federalist and the Democrat—Colonel Bradley and General King—Comparison of New England with European Villages.

My dear C******

From the ecclesiastic notabilities of Ridgefield I turn for a moment to the secular. And first, Colonel Bradley claims my notice, for he was the leading citizen of the place, in station, wealth, education, and power of intellect. He was a tall, gaunt, sallow man, a little bent at the period of my recollection, for he was then well stricken in years. He lived in a two-story white house, at the upper end of the main street, and on the western side. This was of ample dimensions, and had a grave, antique air, the effect of which was enhanced by a row of wide-arching elms, lining the street. It stood on a slight elevation, and somewhat withdrawn from the road; the fence in front was high and close; the doors and windows were always shut, even in summer. I know not why, but this

place had a sort of awfulness about it: it seemed to have a spirit and a voice, which whispered to the passer-by, "Go thy way: this is the abode of one above and beyond thee!"

In order to comprehend the impression likely to be made by such a sombre tenement, you must remember the general aspect of our country villages at that time, and indeed at the present time. Each house was built near the street, with a yard in front and a garden beside it. The fences were low, and of light, open pickets or slats, made to exclude cattle, pigs, and geese, which then had the freedom of the place. There was a cheerful, confiding, wide, open look all around. Everybody peeped from the windows into everybody's grounds. The proprietor was evidently content to be under your eye; nay, as you passed along, his beets and carrots in long beds; his roses and peonies bordering the central walk; the pears and peaches and plums swinging from the trees, all seemed to invite your observation. The barn, having its vast double doors in front, and generally thrown open, presented its interior to your view, with all its gathered treasures of hay, oats, rye, and flax. Near by, but yet apart, stood the crib for the Indian corn, showing its laughing, yellow ears between the slats, designed to give circulation to the air.

There was in all this a liberty and equality which belonged to the age. These had their foundation, partly at least, in two sources—a love of an open,

unobstructed view, and a sort of communal familiarity in the intercourse of society. The first settlers of the country found it covered with forests, which, while they sheltered the lurking Indian, the poaching wolf, and the prowling bear, also obstructed cultivation. Trees were then the great enemy, and to exterminate them was the first great battle of life. In those days men became tree-haters. The shadow of the wood was associated with dearth and danger—the open space with plenty and peace. It was not till long after, when the burning sun of our summers had taught the luxury of shade, that the people of New England discovered their mistake, and began to decorate their streets and pleasure-grounds with trees.

In these, the primeval days of our history, men gathered in the village were mutual protectors one of the other; there was a bond of sympathy between them, founded in necessity, and this led to confidence, and confidence to familiarity. Equality of intercourse, with a general equality of feeling, were the results. And besides, wealth had not accumulated in the hands of particular individuals or in society generally. The habits therefore were simple, and the tastes of the people demanded little beyond the means and usages of mere comfort. The love of embellishment gradually crept over society, but at the period of which I speak, it had not, in Ridgefield and other villages in Connecticut, gone beyond the elements I have described.

The American who travels in foreign countries marked with the vestiges of feudal times, and the consequent division of society into castes, will be forcibly struck with the contrast which these things present to a New England village. As you pass through France, or Italy, or Germany, or Spain, you will find the houses and grounds inclosed by high stone and mortar walls, which not only hide them from the view of the passer-by, but are a positive defense against intrusion. The proprietors bar you out, as if they not only feared your entrance, but suspected you of having the evil eye, and you must not therefore look upon them or their possessions. The walls are generally high and forbidding in proportion to the rank of the proprietor: a palace is often a veritable castle, with its moat, bastions, portcullis, and warder; and all this is imitated, as far as may be, from the chateau down to the bare and desolate tenement of John Smith and Tom Jones. The doors or gates of the rich are of massive bronze or ponderous oak, and fastened with formidable locks. You can only enter by permission, and under the eye of a porter, who scrutinizes you closely. This is true not only of Paris, but of all the neighboring towns, great and small. It is the same throughout the French empire. Even in the villages, which consist of a crowded mass of tenements, like the mean suburbs of a city, every house is a prison, built of stone and mortar, and not merely denying entrance, but shutting out,

as far as possible, the chance surveillance of neighbors and travelers. This is the system throughout the continent. I have often felt almost suffocated in walking and riding in the environs of Florence and Rome, and other European cities, on finding myself confined in a narrow lane, some twelve or fifteen feet wide, with walls so high on either side as to render it impossible to look over them. This is not only true within the cities, and their immediate precincts, but often for miles around; even the fields and farms are frequently thus inclosed, indicating not only fear of intrusion or violence, but a repugnance to mere supervision.

This system of making every house a castle—not sacred by the law, as in our country, but by stone and mortar—had its origin in the violence of feudal times, when might was right. It is a system begun by the kings, imitated by the barons, and perpetuated in society by the emulous vanity of snobs and underlings. At first a necessity, it came at last to be a fashion. At present it is little more, even where it is general or universal. Its chief use now is to defend—not wealth or tangible property—but the fanciful interests of rank. A prince, a duke, a count, must not become familiar to common men. His heart must be packed in ice, so as to silence every large and philanthropic pulsation. He must associate only with his peers. He must exclude the vulgar; he must live aloof, enshrined in high walls and gates of oak and brass,

There must be in the very aspect of his dwelling a standing proclamation of his touch-me-not exaltation. In all things his life and manners must conform to the dignity of his house and his home. He has better blood than other men, and this would be contaminated by contact with common humanity. The rich bankers, Messrs. Shin and Shave, must imitate this high, titled example; they must be exclusive, at least to all beneath them. Messrs. Grog and Prog, the wealthy grocers, must follow suit according to their kind.

This brick-and-mortar exclusiveness answers another purpose: it seems to sustain the theory that the interior of the continental home is inviolable. According to this, the proprietor lays out his grounds as he pleases: he sleeps, eats, drinks, dresses, talks, walks, and amuses himself according to his fancy. He does not consult his neighbors upon any of these things. He is lord of all he surveys; not only his walls, but the current ideas of society insure him a complete domestic and social independence. So long as he does not meddle with politics or the police, he sits under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to make him afraid. He has no apprehension that some eavesdropping ear, or burglarious gaze, is waiting and watching, and will show him up to-morrow in a Two Penny Tale Teller.

This is the state of things, as it appears to the superficial observer, and hence it is that European continental life has great fascinations for some of our

American exclusives. They think it delightful to live enshrined in high walls, and to do as they please. But let us reflect and count the cost. Is this seeming social independence real, permanent, reliable? In point of fact nothing is more hollow and false. Life, liberty, property, are placed between two monsters, either of which may at any moment rise up and devour you. The government, to which you look for protection, is a despot, and full of eyes staring with suspicion. Though it may seem to smile on you, yet it has your *dossier*—that is, your life, opinions, tastes, character—even the secrets of your house and your home—written in its note-book. The police that surrounds you, and seems to protect you, may at any moment denounce and destroy you. It is by privilege, and not by right, that you live, breathe, and have a being. On the other hand, the people, whom you bar out and defy—their time may come, and as you have treated them with scorn, they are likely to repay you with vengeance.

Is not our American system of mutual confidence and mutual support, infinitely better than this? It involves sacrifices, no doubt. Impertinence, gossip, scandal, will thrive in a state of social equality and mutual dependence, but real dignity and true virtue will not seriously suffer. The false semblance, the hollow affectation of these, may be stung, but it will generally be to good and wholesome purpose. And even if there be evils, we shall learn to cure them in

time. We are a young country, and are trying various experiments. We can not expect to leap into the millennium at once. It has taken Europe—modern Europe—more than a thousand years to learn its lessons in philosophy, art, and manners. All things considered, we are as far advanced as they, and that, too, after less than a century of experience. What may we not hope in the future, and at no distant day? Let us, then, be of good cheer!

But to return. Certainly nothing can be more strongly in contrast with our frank, confiding, wide-open New England village than this suspicious, systematic, radical exclusiveness in Continental Europe. Impressed with an early love of the simplicity and equality of our country towns, I have never been able to conquer the disgust with which I have looked upon the walled houses and walled towns of Europe. They seem to me anti-social, unchristian, not merely bespeaking their barbarous origin, but perpetuating the seeds of violence and schism in the bosom of society, which will ere long be sown on the wind to produce the harvest of the whirlwind. If this system and these ideas must be endured in monarchical regions, they should not be introduced into this country. I am happy to add that they are imitated by few, and with even these, they are worn as garments that sit ill upon them, and consequently provoke ridicule rather than respect. An American exclusive is about as much an incongruity in our society

as an American duke. He is generally without real power, and those he attempts to influence are apt to go in the opposite direction from that which he points out.

I beg pardon for this wide digression, which, however, is not without a purpose. Col. Bradley was an exclusive. His cold, distant manner bespoke it. He was, I believe, an honorable man. He was a member of the church; he was steady in his worship, and never missed the sacrament. He was a man of education, and held high offices. His commission as colonel was signed by John Jay, president of the Continental Congress, and his office of Marshal of the District of Connecticut was signed by Washington. His commission as judge* of the County Court was signed by the governor of the State. He was, as I have said, the most distinguished citizen of the place, and naturally enough imagined that such a position carried with it, not the shadow, but the substance of power. He seldom took an open part in the affairs of the town, but when he did, he felt that his word should be law. He deemed even a nod of his head to be imperative; people were bound to consult his very looks, and scenting his trail, should follow in his footsteps. Like most proud men of despotic temper, he sometimes condescended to bring about his ends by puppets and wire pullers. Affecting to dis-

* See note I. p. 522.

dain all meddling, he really contrived openly or covertly to govern the church and the town. When parties in politics arose, he was of course a federalist; though ostentatiously standing aloof from the tarnish of caucuses, he still managed to fill most of the offices by his seen or unseen dictation.

Such a man could little appreciate the real spirit of democracy, now rising, like a spring-tide, over Connecticut. Believing in the "Good old way," he sincerely felt that innovation was synonymous with ruin. Thinking all virtue and all wisdom to be centered in the few, he believed all folly and mischief to be in the many. The passage of power from the former to the latter, he regarded with unaffected horror. The sanctity of the church, the stability of the law, the sacredness of home, life, and property, all seemed to him put at hazard if committed to the rabble, or what to him was equivalent, that dreaded thing—democracy.

He was certainly a man of ability, well read in history, and of superior mental gifts. He saw the coming storm, which soon lowered and thundered in the sky; but he neither comprehended its force, nor the best manner of combating it. He had not those sensitive feelers—the gift of such born democrats as Jefferson and Van Buren—which wind their invisible and subtle threads among the masses, and bring home to the shrewd sensorium an account of every trembling emotion in the breast of the million. In fact,

so far as the mass, the people were concerned, he was a profound owl, seeing deeply into the nothingness of night, but stark blind in the open day of real and pressing action. In wielding power, put into his hands by authority, he was a strong man: in acquiring it at the hands of democracy, he was a child.

I can not better illustrate his character—and the humor of his day and generation—than by depicting one of our town meetings of this era. This was of course held in my father's church, according to custom. At an early hour Col. Bradley was there, for he was punctual in all things. He sat apart in a pew with about half a dozen other men, the magnates of the town. In other pews near by, sat still others, all stanch respectabilities. These were the leading federalists—persons of high character, wealth, and influence. They spoke a few words to each other, and then relapsed into a sort of dignified silence. They did not mingle with the mass: they might be suspected of electioneering—of seeking to exercise an influence over the minds of the people. That was too degrading for them: it might do for General King, and the other democrats who could condescend to such things. These circulated freely in the aisles, giving the warm right-hand of fellowship to all they met, especially the rabble. Nevertheless, the federalists had privately determined a few days before on whom they would cast their votes, and being a majority, they carried the day.

Thus it went on for a time. But gradually, and year by year, the leaven of democracy affected more and more the general mass. Federalism held itself haughtily aloof from the lower classes, while democracy tendered to them the gratifying signals of fraternity. Federalism really and sincerely distrusted the capacity of the people to govern themselves, except through the guidance and authority of the superior classes; democracy believed, or pretended to believe, in the people, and its works were according to its real or seeming faith. There were questions at issue between the parties, which involved these opposite and diverging principles. Shall government be a republic, having an oligarchical bias, and committing power to the hands of the few; or shall it be a democracy, living and breathing and having its being from the constant inspirations of the whole people? Shall suffrage be limited or universal? Shall there be perfect religious toleration? Shall there be no preference in regard to sects? These were the actual, pending questions in Connecticut. With such issues, the parties were not only highly excited, but there was a depth of sincerity which gave a certain dignity even to party strife.

However old-fashioned it may seem, I still look back upon those stiff federalists, sitting in their pews like so many judges in Israel—rigid in their principles, hard, but honest in their opinions—with a certain degree of respect. Perhaps, too, they

were not altogether wrong, though the battle has gone against them. If, at the outset of our government, which was launched at the very period when the French Revolution was agitating the world with its turbulent waves, the suffrage had been universal, probably we should have gone to destruction. Federalism, no doubt, locked the wheels of the car of state, and thus stayed and regulated its progress, till the steep was passed, and we were upon the safe and level plain. Theoretically wrong, according to present ideas, federalism was useful and necessary in its day. It is to be regretted that its spirit of patriotism is not imitated by all modern partisans.

Col. Bradley, whom I have described as the head of the federal party in Ridgefield, was pretty nearly a type of his kind in those days. There was perhaps a shade of Jesuitism about him, a love of unseen influences, the exercise of invisible power, which was personal and not a necessary part of his principles. I perfectly recollect his appearance at church, and the impression he made upon me. He was bald, and wore a black silk cap, drawn down close over his eyes. These were like jet, not twinkling, but steady and intense, appearing very awful from the dark caverns in which they were set. I hardly dared to look at him, and if perchance his slow but searching gaze fell upon me, I started as if something had wounded me. At long intervals he came to our house, and though he was of course a supporter of my father,

being a member of the church, I had the impression that everybody breathed thick and anxiously while he was there, and felt relieved when he went away. It is now many years since he passed to his tomb, yet his appearance and general character are still fresh in my memory. He was not loved, but on the whole, his life was beneficial to the community in which he lived. He had high gifts and large opportunities: if he did not do all the good he might, it was certainly rather through the influence of original, constitutional defects, than willing and chosen obliquity of conduct.

It is not possible to conceive of two persons more unlike than the one I have just sketched and General King. The former was tall, thin, dark; the latter was of middle height, stout, erect, and florid. The first was highly educated, meditative, secret, deep, cold, circumspect; the latter was unschooled, yet intelligent; frank, though perhaps superficial; imperious, yet fearless and confiding. Col. Bradley was a federalist; Gen. King a democrat. These two, indeed, were the leaders of the two great political parties in Ridgefield.

If we could dive into the heart of man, and discern the reasons why one takes this course and another that; why one is of this sect or religion, or that party in politics, I imagine we should make some curious discoveries. In certain cases the springs of these actions are open: one is obviously deter-

mined in his choice by education; another manifestly derives a proclivity from family influences; another is governed by his social position; but in other cases, we are left to guess at motives, and these often seem so personal and selfish as to reflect little honor upon human nature. As to professed politicians, I think mankind generally, without being suspected of cynicism, regard them as choosing their party on the same principles that they would choose a horse—in both cases selecting that which they can best mount and ride. They look upon the good public as so many donkeys, made to be used for hobbies and then contemptuously dismissed. We see men act thus openly and shamelessly every day of our lives, and strange to say, it is not punished, however scandalous it may appear. Nay, so far as we can judge, the people rather like it.

In still other instances the causes which determine the political conduct of men are more latent, though not the less selfish and personal. We are very apt to see according to our point of view. The fable of the pigeon's neck, which reflects red on one side and purple on the other, and hence leads two persons in opposite positions into a dispute as to the actual color of the bird, is instructive. One man, in an elevated condition in life, and having large possessions, naturally inclines to magnify the importance of authority, and the respect due to property. Thus, he becomes a federalist or a conservative. Another, destitute of

all but his head and hands, presses the claims of labor, and exalts the rights of man. He becomes a democrat. In these instances, persons actually controlled by a regard to their several positions, through the seductions and delusions of the human heart, generally consider themselves as actuated by an exclusive regard to patriotism and principle. I am afraid that we can find few instances—at least in the arena of politics—in which the heart of man rises above this fountain-head of selfishness.

The cases in which the manufacturer sustains protection and the ship-owner free-trade, the southern man the interests of slave labor, and the northern man the interests of free labor, are similar examples of selfishness, though somewhat more gross. It might seem, then, that the ballot-box — the great depository of the public will, and the source of public action and power in a republican government—must be a mass of corruption ; that if the majority of votes are leavened with selfishness, the aggregated millions cast at the polls must be an offense in the sight of God. Yet in truth it is not so. The whole result is really a very intelligent index to the actual wants of the country. Suppose every man has voted selfishly, the accumulated suffrage shows where the weight of opinion lies as to the entire interests of the people. And even when we consider the juggles of politicians who make loud professions, only to obtain office, we know that for the most part,

when they have attained it, the government goes on nearly the same, whoever may administer it. Thus, on the whole, the ballot-box develops and represents a balance of good sense in the nation that outweighs even the multitudinous vices, follies, and foibles of individuals.

If I were to be asked what made Gen. King a democrat, I should be at a loss to answer. He was fond of authority: his whole presence and manner bespoke it. His carriage was erect, his head set back, his chest protruded. His hair was stiff and bristling, and being long on the top, was combed back in the manner of Gen. Jackson's. Like him he had a decidedly military air and character. He was, no doubt, a very good man on the whole, but I imagine he was not imbued with any special sympathy for the masses, or the rights of man. I have pretty good reason to believe that his natural disposition was dictatorial—despotic. It is related that one day he came into the field where his men were haying. A thunder-storm was approaching, and he commanded the laborers in a tone of authority to do this and that, thus requiring in fact what was impossible. Jaklin, an old negro, noted for his dry wit, being present, said in an undertone—

"I'm thankful the Lord reigns."

"Why so?" said a bystander.

"Because," was the reply, "if the Lord didn't reign, the Gineral would!"

Why, then, was he a democrat? Was it because Col. Bradley and himself were rivals in trade, rivals in wealth, rivals in position? Was it that by a natural proclivity, derived from this relation, he became an opponent of one who stood in his way, and thus became a democrat? Who will venture to solve such questions as these?

I pray you not to consider me as saying any thing invidious of Gen. King. He was really a man to be respected, perhaps loved, even though he was not of great intellect, or morally cast in the mould of perfection. He had plain practical sense, perfect sincerity, high moral courage, an open, cheerful, frank manner. Be it understood that I speak from my childish recollections. Such is the impression he made upon me. Erect, martial, authoritative as he was, I still liked him, for to me he was kind, always asked about our family, and was particularly unlike that cold, silent, dark-browed Col. Bradley. His whole person bespoke manliness. No one looking on him would suspect him of meanness, in thought, word, or deed. He was eminently successful in business, and his wealth, at length, outstripped that of his great rival. His party also triumphed, and he became the first man of the place in position and influence.

If thus fortunate in these respects, he was even more so in his family. He had ten children—four sons and six daughters: all reached maturity, and

constituted one of the comeliest groups I have ever known. The girls all married, save one: three of the sons—among the handsome men of their time—professed bachelorism; a proof of what all shrewd observers know, that handsome men, spontaneously enjoying the smiles of the sex, feel no need of resigning their liberty, while ugly men are forced to capitulate on bended knees, and accept the severe conditions of matrimony, as the only happy issue out of their solitude. One only, Rufus H. King, of Albany, whom I have already mentioned, took upon himself the honors of wedlock. All these persons possessed that happy balance of good sense, good feelings, good looks, and good manners, which insures success and respectability in life. Is not such a family history worthy of being recorded in this book of the chronicles of Ridgefield?

LETTER XVIII.

The Ingersolls—Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll—Lieutenant-governor Ingersoll—New Haven Belles—A chivalrous Virginian among the Connecticut D.D.'s—Grace Ingersoll—A New Haven Girl at Napoleon's Court—Real Romance—A Puritan in a Convent.

My dear C******

General King's house stood on the northern slope of a small swell of ground, midway between the two extremities of the main street, and on the western side. It was a rather large two-story edifice, always neatly kept, and glowing in fresh white paint. Wealth and respectability in the full tide of successful experiment, were as readable in its appearance as if it had been so written in front, like the designation of a railway station.

Contiguous to this fresh and flourishing mansion, on the southern side, was a brown, gable-roofed house, with two venerable, but still green and flourishing button-wood trees in front. The building was marked with age, the surface of its clapboards, unprotected by paint, being softened and spongy through the influence of the seasons. The roof was of a yellowish-green tint, imparted by a gathering film of moss. The windows were contracted, and the casing, thin and plain, bespoke the architecture of our day of small things. All around was rather bare, and the little

recess in front, open and uninclosed, was at once shaven close and desecrated by a flock of geese that every night made it their camp-ground. Nevertheless, there was a certain dignity about the button-wood trees in front, and the old brown house in the rear, that excited respect and curiosity in the beholder. There was indeed some reason, for this was the home of the Ingersolls.

The Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll* was my father's immediate predecessor, as minister of the First Congregational Church in Ridgefield. Though he has been dead three fourths of a century, tradition still cherishes his memory as an able preacher, a devoted pastor, and a most amiable man. In my boyhood he had long since passed away, but his widow still lingered in the old brown house I have described. She was every way a superior woman—wise, good, loving, and beloved. Her husband's mantle descended upon her shoulders, and she wore it worthily before the world and the Church. By the latter she was cherished as a guardian saint. She was always my father's friend, and in the critical and difficult passages which are sure to arise between a pastor and his people, she was the ready and efficient peacemaker. I remember her, though faintly and as a dream, yet one in which I saw a pale, gray, saintly old lady, almost too good for this wicked world.

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* See note I., p. 516.

Mr. Ingersoll had a large family, all of whom were of mature age at the period of my childhood. The youngest daughter was wife of Gen. King, and mother of the family I have described. Two of the three sons —Joseph and Moss—were deaf and dumb, and occupied the family mansion: the other son was the late Jonathan Ingersoll, of New Haven, distinguished by his eminent talents and many virtues.

Joseph Ingersoll—according to my recollection—was a plain, solid, dull-looking man, who passed to and fro with rigid directness, never smiling, and seeming to take little interest in what was passing around him. Though naturally quick-minded, and able to express a few ideas by signs, he still seemed to shun intercourse with the world, and even with his friends and neighbors. He and his brother Moss carried on the farm. He rose every day at the same hour; took his meals and retired to bed with the precision of a chronometer. You might safely have set your clock by him. At a particular time in the morning he went to the fields, where he labored with the steadiness of a mill: at a particular time in the afternoon or evening he returned. He revolved through the seasons, performing the labors due to each with the same exactitude. Had he been a machine, wound up and set each day, he could hardly have been more the creature of routine.

Moss Ingersoll was singularly unlike his brother Joseph. While the latter remained a bachelor, the

former was married, and had a family of several children. He was of a sharp, ready mind, social in his disposition, cheerful, witty, and of pleasing personal appearance and address. His whole face beamed with intelligence; his manners bespoke a certain natural refinement, and a quick sensibility to the pleasures of social intercourse. It must be remembered that this was long prior to the modern art of teaching the deaf and dumb; nevertheless, his father had taken great pains with him, and had given him some instruction through the use of signs. By means of these, Moss conversed to a limited extent with his wife and children, and indeed the whole neighborhood. He came frequently to our house, and was a great favorite. I learned to talk with him a little, and when I met him, he always had something interesting to say. His signs were descriptive, and displayed a turn for humorous associations. Deacon Olmstead was the Big Cane; my father the Bald Pate; Gen. King the Long Sword; Lieut. Smith the See-Saw, and so on. He could write so as to keep accounts, but could not read, and it is probable his range of abstract ideas was narrow. His ready perceptions, however, gave him a large acquaintance with common things. He even seemed to comprehend the outlines of Christianity, and to feel the obligations of conforming to its requisitions. How far he reached into the profounder depths of religion — the mysteries of God and eternity, of man and his vast capacities and ama-

zing destinies, as unfolded by revelation—it is impossible to know. It is related that a deaf and dumb man in France grew up to manhood, and seemed to have a highly religious tendency and experience. He attended the services of the church with steadfast assiduity, and wore a devout and penitential air. No one doubted his comprehension of the groundwork of religion, or the reality of his piety. Afterward, by a surgical operation, he recovered his hearing. It then appeared that he had never conceived the idea of God, a future state, or moral responsibility! His religion was wholly a pantomime. He saw that religious forms and ceremonies were esteemed, and hence he found pleasure in them. He was not a hypocrite, nor an automaton, but a simple exemplification of that mimetic aptitude which is a part of our nature. How large a part of the religion of the world is no better than this, it is not for us to say.

It is probable that Moss Ingersoll had passed beyond this state of living death: no doubt he comprehended—faintly, at least—the idea of a God and human accountability; it is even supposed that he conceived the triune existence of the Deity. He certainly understood something of astronomy, and the nature of the heavenly bodies. Knowing so much, how must he have yearned to know more! How must his active, earnest mind have struggled within its prison, and sought to solve a thousand mysteries which haunted and perplexed it! What

a world of thought and knowledge would have been opened to him by the gift of speech, and yet—what unfathomed and unfathomable mysteries would have remained unsolved, still to haunt and perplex him! Within the narrow circle of his observation and experience, he was almost as near the great mysteries hid in the bosom of the Almighty, which come so often and so anxiously to ask a solution, as the profoundest philosopher. I remember once, while traveling with Mr. Webster, to have asked him if he had been able, in any degree, to penetrate the curtain which hangs over the origin of man, of nature, and of God. He replied that the plainest mind could see just as far in that direction as the most acute: the Almighty had shut the door upon these his secrets, and it was vain for us to attempt to open it.

How hard is it to submit to this stern decree! Behind that awful barrier lie those mighty truths which from the beginning have stimulated, yet baffled, human thought and inquiry. No mind can see them, or yet forego them. There is God: there is man's history, man's destiny, written in letters of light! Oh that we could behold and read the amazing revelation! It may not be: the door is closed; we can not force it! The tyrant Death holds the key: he alone has power to open it; and he at last will open it to us all. Till then, patience, hope, submission—these are our only resources.

When I left Ridgefield, the two deaf and dumb

Ingersolls were still living. On my return there, some years after, both were in their graves. If their privileges were less than those of other men, so doubtless was their accountability. Perhaps even the balance of enjoyment in their lives was not much less than it would have been had they possessed their full faculties. With increased gifts come increased temptations. Men of superior endowments too often abuse their privileges, and their lives sink even below the level of ordinary men. Those who are born rich often squander their wealth, and thus the bankrupt is even more wretched than he who was a pauper from the beginning. At all events, I look back upon the somewhat mournful story of these two men with a cheerful conviction that on earth their lives passed tranquilly away, and that hereafter the cloud that shaded their minds will be removed in such manner and measure as to compensate for the privations they suffered here.

Jonathan Ingersoll, their brother, was an eminent lawyer, and settled at New Haven. Personally, he was erect, slender, and very much like his distinguished son, the present Ralph I. Ingersoll. He was marked by a nervous twitch of the face, which usually signalized itself when he began to address the jury. On these occasions his eyes opened and shut spasmodically; at the same time he drew the corners of his mouth up and down, the whole seeming as if it was his object to set the court in a roar. Sometimes he succeeded, in

spite of all his efforts to the contrary. Indeed, it was impossible for a person on seeing this for the first time, to avoid a smile—perhaps a broad one. It might seem that such a frailty would have been a stumbling-block in his profession; yet it was not so. I suspect, indeed, that his practice as a lawyer was benefited by it—for the world likes an easy handle to a great name, and this is readily supplied by a personal peculiarity. At all events, such was the dignity of his character, the grace of his language, and the perfection of his logic, his law, and his learning, that he stood among the foremost of his profession. He became Lieutenant-governor of the State, a judge of the Supreme Court, and held various other responsible offices.

This gentleman had a large family — sons and daughters: the names of the former are honorably recorded in the official annals of their native State —nay, of the United States. The daughters were distinguished for personal attractions and refined accomplishments. One of them claims a special notice —Grace Ingersoll: how beautiful the name, how suggestive of what she was in mind, in person, in character! I saw her once—but once, and I was then a child—yet her image is as distinct as if I had seen her yesterday.

In my boyhood these New Haven Ingersolls came to Ridgefield occasionally, especially in summer, to visit their relations there. They all seemed to me

like superior beings, especially Mrs. Ingersoll, who was fair and forty about those days. On a certain occasion, Grace, who was a school companion of my elder sister's, came to our house. I imagine she did not see or notice me. Certainly she did not discover in the shy boy in the corner her future biographer. She was tall and slender, yet fully rounded, with rich, dark hair, and large Spanish eyes—now seeming blue and now black, and changing with the objects on which she looked, or the play of emotions within her breast. In complexion she was a brunette, yet with a melting glow in her cheek, as if she had stolen from the sun the generous hues which are reserved for the finest of fruit and flowers. Her beauty was in fact so striking—at once so superb and so conciliating—that I was both awed and fascinated by her. Wherever she went I followed, though keeping at a distance, and never losing sight of her. She spent the afternoon at our house, and then departed, and I saw her no more.

It was not long after this that a Frenchman by the name of Grellet, who had come to America on some important commercial affairs, chanced to be at New York, and there saw Grace Ingersoll. Such beauty as that of the New Haven belle is rare in any country: it is never indigenous in France. Even if such could be born there, the imperious force of conventional manners would have stamped itself upon her, and made her a fashionable lady, at the expense

of that Eve-like beauty and simplicity which characterized her. It is not astonishing, then, that the stranger—accustomed as he was to all the beauty of French fashionable life—should still have been smitten with this new and startling type of female loveliness.

I may remark, in passing, and as pertinent to my narrative, that the women of New Haven in these bygone days were famous for their beauty. They may be so yet, but I have not been there—except as a railroad passenger—for years, and can not establish the point by my own direct testimony. As to the olden time, however, I can verify my statements from the evidence of my own eyes, as well as the records of long tradition. Among the legends I have heard on this subject is one to this effect. There was once a certain Major L....—a Virginian—who I believe was at one time a member of Congress. He was a federalist; and when I saw him at Washington, about the year 1820, he wore a thick queue, and a good sprinkling of hair-powder—then generally esteemed very undemocratic. He was a large and handsome man, and at the period of which I speak was some fifty years of age. But being a Virginian, and withal a bachelor, he was still highly chivalrous in his feelings and conduct toward the fair sex.

Now, once upon a time this handsome old bachelor paid a visit to New England. Having stayed a while

at Boston, he journeyed homeward till he came to New Haven. It chanced to be Commencement-day —the great jubilee of the city—while he was there. Having no acquaintances, he set out in the morning to go and see the ceremonies. Directed by the current of people to the chapel, he went thither, and asked for admittance. It was the custom first to receive the reverend clergy and the ladies, who had privileged seats reserved for them—the world at large being kept out till these were accommodated: a fact which shows that our Puritan ancestors, if they did not hold women to be divine, placed them on the same level as divines. The doorkeeper scanned Major L.... as he came up to the place, and observing him to be a good-looking gentleman in black, with a tinge of powder on his coat-collar, set him down as a minister of the Gospel, and so let him pass. The sexton within took him in charge, and placed him in the clerical quarter between two old D. D.'s—Dr. Perkins, of West Hartford, and Dr. Marsh, of Wethersfield, each having the Five Points sticking out—the one from his gray locks and the other from his frizzed wig—as plainly as if they had been emblazoned on a banner.

The major, with the conscious ease of his genial nature and southern breeding, took his seat and surveyed the scene. His gaze soon fell upon a battery of eyes—beautiful, yet dangerous—that ran along the gallery. Unconscious of the sanctity and saintliness

of his position, he half rose and made a low and gracious bow to the ladies above, as if to challenge their whole artillery. Every eye in the house was thus drawn toward him. Before he had time to compose himself, Miss F....., one of the belles of the day, came down the broad aisle, full upon him! He had never seen any thing so marvellously beautiful—at once so simple and so superb, so much a woman and so much a divinity. He held his breath till she had passed, when he turned suddenly to Rev. Dr. Marsh, and giving him a slap on his shoulder—which dislodged a shower of powder from his wig—exclaimed, "By all the gods, sir, there is Venus herself!"

It is not easy to conceive of the consternation of all around, and especially of the reverend clergy. Their grizzled hair stood out, as if participating in the general horror. What could possess their reverend brother? Was he suddenly beset by the Evil One, thus to utter the unhallowed name of Venus in the house of God? It was indeed a mystery. Gradually, and one by one, they left the infected pew, and Major L...., finding himself alone, quietly pocketed the joke, which, however, he often repeated to his friends after his return to Virginia.

This legend refers to a date some dozen years subsequent to the era of Grace Ingersoll, and which therefore shows that the traditional beauty of the New Haven ladies had not then declined. I now return to my story. From the first view of that fair lady,

M. Grellet was a doomed man. Familiar with the brilliant court of the Parisian capital, he might have passed by unharmed, even by one as fair as our heroine, had it not been for that simplicity, that Puritanism of look and manner, which belonged to the social climate in which she was brought up—so strongly in contrast to the prescribed pattern graces of a French lady. He came, he saw, he was conquered. Being made captive, he had no other way than to capitulate. He was a man of good family, a fine scholar, and a finished gentleman. He made due and honorable proposals, and was accepted—though on the part of the parents with many misgivings. Marriage ensued, and the happy pair departed for France.

This took place in 1806. M. Grellet held a high social position, and on his arrival at Paris, it was a matter of propriety that his bride should be presented at court. Napoleon was then in the full flush of his imperial glory. It must have been with some palpitations of heart that the New Haven girl—scarcely turned of eighteen years, and new to the great world—prepared to be introduced to the glittering circle of the Tuileries, and under the eye of the emperor himself. As she was presented to him, in the midst of a dazzling throng, blazing with orders and diamonds, she was a little agitated, and her foot was entangled for a moment in her long train—then an indispensable part of the court costume. Napo-

MADAM GRELLET (GRACE INGERSOLL) AT THE COURT OF NAPOLEON. Vol. 1, 260.

leon, who, with all his greatness, never rose to the dignity of a gentleman, said in her hearing, "*Voilà de la gaucherie americaine!*" American awkwardness! Perhaps a certain tinge of political bitterness mingled in the speech, for Jerome had been seduced into marriage by the beauty of an American lady, greatly to the chagrin of his aspiring and unprincipled brother. At all events, though he saw the blush his rudeness had created, a malicious smile played upon his lips, indicative of that contempt of the feelings of women, which was one of his characteristics.*

Madame Grellet, however, survived the shock of this discourtesy, which signalized her entry into fashionable life. She soon became a celebrity in the court circles, and always maintained pre-eminence, alike for beauty of person, grace of manners, and delicacy and dignity of character. More than once she had her revenge upon the emperor, when in the center of an admiring circle, he, with others, paid homage to her fascinations. Yet this transplantation of the fair Puritan, even to the Paradise of fashion, was not healthful.

M. Grellet became one of Bonaparte's receivers-general, and took up his residence in the department of the Dordogne—though spending the winters in Paris.

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* Napoleon's estimate of woman was very low: it was his cherished opinion that the orientals understood much better how to dispose of the female sex than the Europeans. There was a brusquerie, a precipitancy in his manner toward women, both in public and private, which his greatest admirers admit to have been repugnant to every feeling of female delicacy. See *Alison's Europe*, vol. ix. p. 151.

Upon the fall of Napoleon, he lost his office, but was reappointed during the "hundred days," only to lose it again upon the final restoration of Louis XVIII. The shadows now gathered thick and dark around him. His wife having taken a violent cold was attacked with pleurisy, which resulted in a gradual decline. Gently but surely her life faded away. Death loves a shining mark, and at the early age of five-and-twenty she descended to the tomb. With two lovely daughters—the remembrances of his love and his affliction—M. Grellet returned to the south of France, and in the course of years, he too was numbered with the dead.

Almost half a century passed away, and the memory of Grace Ingersoll had long been obliterated from my mind, when it was accidentally recalled. One evening, being at the Tuileries—among the celebrities of the world's most brilliant court—I saw her brother, R. I. Ingersoll. It was curious to meet here with one to whom I had not spoken—though I had occasionally seen him—since we were boys together in Ridgefield. The last incident associated with him in my memory was that we played mumbletepeg together on the green mound, beneath the old Ingersoll buttonwoods. He was now the American Ambassador to Russia, and on his way thither, and I was a chance sojourner in Paris.

We met as if we were old friends. At length I recollected his sister Grace, and asked if her children

were living. He replied in the affirmative, and that he was on the point of paying them a visit. I saw him a month afterward, and he told me that he had just returned from the south of France, where he had enjoyed a most interesting stay of a fortnight with his nieces. One—the elder—was married, and had children around her. She was the wife of an eminent physician, and in easy circumstances—occupying a good social position. She was a charming person, and, as he thought, possessed something of the appearance and character of his lost sister. He found that she could sing the simple Connecticut ballads—taught her in childhood, perhaps in the cradle—by her mother: she had also some of her sketches in pencil, and other personal mementoes, which she cherished as sacred relics of her parent, who now seemed a saint in her memory. How beautiful and how touching are such remembrances—flowers that cast perfume around the very precincts of the tomb!

The other neice—where was she? In a convent, lost to the world—devoted to God—if indeed to extinguish the lights of life be devotion to Him who gave them! By special favor, however, she was permitted to leave her seclusion for a short period, that she might see her uncle. She came to the house of her sister, and remained there several days She was a most interesting person, delicate, graceful, sensitive, still alive to all human affections. She was generally cheerful, and entered with a ready

heart into the pleasures of home and friends around her. I shall venture to quote a single passage from a letter on this subject, addressed to me by her uncle. Speaking of his visit above alluded to, he says:

"One day, after we had been talking as usual of America and her American relations, she excused herself to me for a short time, that she might go to her room and write a letter to the convent. She was gone from me much longer than I had expected, and on her return I said to her:

"'You must have been writing a long letter, if I may judge by the time you have been about it?'

"'Yes,' was her reply; 'but I have not been writing all the while; I have been praying.'

"'Indeed! Do you pray often?'

"'Yes—and even more often here than when I am at the convent.'

"'Why so?'

"'I fear, my dear uncle, that my affection for you will attach me too much to earth.'"

How strange, how affecting are the vicissitudes of life as we read them in the intimate personal histories of homes and hearts! The direct descendants of the Puritan minister of Ridgefield—the one a mother, blending her name, her lineage, and her language, in the annals of a foreign land; the other, a devotee, seeking in the seclusion of her cell—and perhaps not altogether in vain—"that peace which the world can not give!"

LETTER XIX.

Mat Olmstead, the Town Wit—The Salamander Hat—The Great Eclipse—Sharp Logic—Lieutenant Smith, the Town Philosopher—The Purchase of Louisiana—Lewis and Clarke's Exploring Expedition—The Great Meteor—Hamilton and Burr—The Leopard and the Chesapeake—Fulton's Steamboats—Granther Baldwin, the Village Miser—Sarah Bishop, the Hermitess.

MY DEAR C******

Matthew Olmstead, or Mat Olmstead, as he was usually called, was a day laborer, and though his speciality was the laying of stone fences, he was equally adroit at hoeing corn, mowing, and farm-work in general. He was rather short and thick-set, with a long nose, a little bulbous in his latter days—with a ruddy complexion, and a mouth shutting like a pair of nippers—the lips having an oblique dip to the left, giving a keen and mischievous expression to his face, qualified, however, by more of mirth than malice. This feature was indicative of his mind and character, for he was sharp in speech, and affected a crisp, biting brevity, called dry wit. He had also a turn for practical jokes, and a great many of these were told of him, to which, perhaps, he had no historical claim. The following is one of them, and is illustrative of his manner, even if it originated elsewhere.

On a cold stormy day in December—as I received the tale—a man chanced to come into the bar-room

of Keeler's tavern, where Mat Olmstead and several of his companions were lounging. The stranger had on a new hat of the latest fashion, and still shining with the gloss of the iron. He seemed conscious of his dignity, and carried his head in such a manner as to invite attention to it. Mat's knowing eye immediately detected the weakness of the stranger; so he approached him, and said—

"What a very nice hat you've got on. Pray who made it?"

"Oh, it came from New York," was the reply.

"Well, let me take it," said Mat.

The stranger took it off his head, gingerly, and handed it to him.

"It is a wonderful nice hat," said Matthew; "and I see it's a real salamander!"

"Salamander?" said the other. "What's that?"

"Why a real salamander hat won't burn!"

"No? I never heard of that before: I don't believe it's one of that kind."

"Sartain sure; I'll bet you a mug of flip of it."

"Well, I'll stand you!"

"Done: now I'll just put it under the fore-stick?"

"Well."

It being thus arranged, Mat put the hat under the fore-stick into a glowing mass of coals. In an instant it took fire, collapsed, and rolled into a black, crumpled mass of cinders.

"I du declare," said Mat Olmstead, affecting great

astonishment—"it ain't a salamander hat arter all. Well; I'll pay the flip!"

Yet wit is not always wisdom. Keen as this man was as to things immediately before him, he was of narrow understanding. He seemed not to possess the faculty of reasoning beyond his senses. He never would admit that the sun was fixed, and that the world turned round. In an argument upon this point before an audience of his class, he would have floored Sir John Herschel or Lord Rosse by his homely but pointed ridicule.

I remember that when the great solar eclipse of 1806 was approaching, he with two other men were at work in one of our fields, not far from the house. The eclipse was to begin at ten or eleven o'clock, and my father sent an invitation to the workmen to come up and observe it through some pieces of smoked glass. They came, though Mat ridiculed the idea of an eclipse —not but the thing might happen—but it was idle to suppose it could be foretold. While they were waiting and watching for the great event, my father explained that the light of the sun upon the earth was to be interrupted by the intrusion of the moon, and that this was to produce a transient night upon the scene around us.

Mat laughed with that low scoffing chuckle, with which a woodchuck, safe in his rocky den, replies to the bark of a besieging dog.

"So you don't believe this?" said my father.

"No," said Mat, shaking his head, and bringing his lips obliquely together, like the blades of a pair of shears. "I don't believe a word of it. You say, Parson Goodrich, that the sun is fixed, and don't move?"

"Yes, I say so."

"Well: didn't you preach last Sunday out of the 10th chapter of Joshua?"

"Yes."

"And didn't you tell us that Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still?"

"Yes."

"Well: what was the use of telling the sun to stand still if it never moved?"

This was a dead shot, especially at a parson, and in the presence of an audience inclined, from the fellowship of ignorance, to receive the argument. Being thus successful, Mat went on.

"Now, Parson Goodrich, let's try it agin. If you turn a thing that's got water in it bottom up, the water'll run out, won't it?"

"No doubt."

"If the world turns round, then, your well will be turned bottom up, and the water'll run out!"

At this point my father applied his eye to the sun through a piece of smoked glass. The eclipse had begun; a small piece was evidently cut off from the rim. My father stated the fact, and the company around looked through the glass and saw that it was so. Mat Olmstead, however, sturdily refused to try it,

and bore on his face an air of supreme contempt, as much as to say, "You don't humbug me!"

But ignorance and denial of the works of God do not interrupt their march. By slow and invisible degrees, a shade crept over the landscape. There was no cloud in the sky, but a chill stole through the atmosphere, and a strange dimness fell over the world. It was midday, yet it seemed like the approach of night. There was something fearful in this, as if the sun was about to be blotted out in the midst of his glory—the light of the world to be extinguished at the moment of its noon! All nature seemed chilled and awed by the strange phenomenon. The birds, with startled looks and ominous notes, left their busy cares and gathered in the thick branches of the trees, where they seemed to hold counsel one with another. The hens, with slow and hesitating steps, set their faces toward their roosts. One old hen, with a brood of chickens, walked along with a tall, halting tread, and sought shelter upon the barn-floor, where she gathered her young ones under her wings, continuing to make a low sound, as if saying—"Hush, my babes, lie still and slumber." At the same time, like many a mother before her, while seeking to bring peace to her offspring, her own heart was agitated with profound anxiety.

I well remember this phenomenon*—the first of the

* This eclipse (June 16th, 1806), being total, attracted great attention The weather was perfectly calm, and the phenomena exceedingly in

kind I had ever witnessed. Its sublimity absorbed my whole faculties: it seemed to me the veritable, visible work of the Almighty. The ordinary course of nature was, indeed, equally stupendous; but this incident, from its mere novelty, was a startling and impressive display of the mighty mechanism of the skies. Yet, though thus occupied by this seeming conflict of the heavenly bodies, I recollect to have paid some attention to the effect of the scene upon others. Mat Olmstead said not a word; the other workmen were overwhelmed with emotions of awe.

At length the eclipse began to pass away, and nature slowly returned to her equanimity. The birds came forth, and sang a jubilee, as if relieved from some impending calamity. The hum of life again filled the air; the old hen with her brood gayly resumed her rambles, and made the leaves and gravel

teresting. At the point of greatest obscuration, the air was so chill as to make an overcoat desirable. A short time before this, the darkness in the west assumed the appearance of an approaching thunder-storm. A luminous ring surrounded the moon after the sun was totally hid. Such was the darkness that the time could not be determined by a watch. The number of stars visible was greater than at the full moon.

An account of the scene in Boston thus describes it: "The morning was ushered in with the usual hum of business, which gradually subsided as the darkness advanced. An uninterrupted silence succeeded. A fresh breeze which had prevailed, now ceased, and all was calm. The birds retired to rest: the rolling chariot and the rumbling car were no more heard. The axe and the hammer were suspended. Returning light reanimated the face of things. We seemed as in the dawn of creation, when '*God said, Let there be light, and there was light!*' and an involuntary cheer of gratulation burst from the assembled spectators."—*Monthly Anthology*, 1806.

fly with her invigorated scratchings. The workmen, too, having taken a glass of grog, returned thoughtfully to their labors.

"After all," said one of the men, as they passed along to the field, "I guess the parson was right about the sun and the moon."

"Well, perhaps he was," said Mat; "but then Joshua was wrong."

Notwithstanding this man's habitual incredulity, he had still his weak side, for he was a firm believer in ghosts—not ghosts in general, but two that he had seen himself. Like most other ghost-seers, he patronized none but his own. These were of enormous size, white and winged like angels. He had seen them one dark night as he was going to his house—a little brown tenement, situated on a lonesome lane that diverged to the left from the high-road to Salem. It was very late, and Mat had spent the evening at the tavern, like Tam O'Shanter; like him, he "was na fou, but just had plenty"—a circumstance, I must say, rather uncommon with him, for he was by no means a tippler, beyond the habits of that day. It is probable that all modern ghosts are revealed only to the second-sight of alcohol, insanity, or the vapors; even in this case of Mat Olmstead's, it turned out that his two angels were a couple of white geese, whom he had startled into flight, as he stumbled upon them quietly snoozing in the joint of a rail fence!

It has often appeared to me that Mat Olmstead was

a type—a representative of a class of men not very rare in this world of ours. It is not at all uncommon to find people, and those who are called strong-minded, who are habitual unbelievers in things possible and probable—nay, in things well established by testimony—while they readily become the dupes of the most absurd illusions and impositions. Dr. Johnson, it is stated, did not believe in the great earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, until six months after it had happened, while he readily accepted the egregious deception of the Cock Lane Ghost. In our day we see people—and sharp ones too—who reject the plainest teachings of common sense, sanctioned by the good and wise of centuries, and follow with implicit faith some goose of the imagination, like Joe Smith or Brigham Young. These are Mat Olmsteads, a little intoxicated by their own imaginations, and in their night of ignorance and folly, they fall down and worship the grossest and goosiest of illusions.

I now turn to a different character, Lieutenant, or as we all called him, *Leftenant* Smith. He has been already introduced to you, but a few touches are still necessary to complete his portrait. He was a man o extensive reading, and large information. He was also some sixty years old, and had stored in his memory the results of his own observation and experience. He read the newspapers, and conversed with travelers —thus keeping up with the march of events. He affected philosophy, and deemed himself the great

intelligencer of the town. If he was thus rich in lore, he dearly loved to dispense it, asking only in return attentive listeners. He liked discussion, provided it was all left to himself. He was equal to all questions: with my father, he dilated upon such high matters as the Purchase of Louisiana; Lewis and Clarke's Exploring Expedition; the death of Hamilton in the duel with Aaron Burr; the attack of the Leopard on the Chesapeake;* Fulton's attempts at steam navigation, and the other agitating topics of

* These several events, which have now passed into the mist of distance, all caused great excitement at the time they transpired.

The *Purchase of Louisiana*, in 1803, was made by our ministers in France, Livingston and Monroe, of Bonaparte, then "Consul for life," for the sum of fifteen millions of dollars. Though the treaty was wholly unauthorized, our government accepted and ratified it. Jefferson, then President, sanctioned and promoted it, though he knew it to be unconstitutional, as has since appeared by his private correspondence: a fact the more remarkable, as he had always pretended to make a strict construction of the Constitution a cardinal political principle. The federalists opposed the treaty, as unconstitutional, and as a destruction of the balance between the free States and slave States, established by that instrument. The democratic party, knowing the truth of all this, but having a majority, accepted the treaty. Though apparently a beneficial measure—the mode in which it was effected, has laid the foundation of the most alarming evils. This example of a palpable violation of the Constitution by Jefferson—the great apostle of democracy—and sanctioned and glorified by that dominant party, has deprived that instrument of much of its binding force upon the conscience of the country. Hence, it has become the constant subject of invasion and violation by party. If our government is ever overthrown, its death-blow will be traced to this act. Had the true course been adopted—that of a modification of the Constitution by the people—no doubt that stipulations in respect to slavery would have been imposed, which would have prevented its present enormous extension, and saved the country from the irritating difficulties in which that subject now involves us.

It is a matter worthy of remark that this first violation of the Constitution came from the strict constructionists: it is from them also, at the

those times, as they came one after another. He was profound upon the sources of the Nile and the Niger, learned upon the site of Eldorado, and magniloquent upon Napoleon, then making the whole earth re sound with his ominous march toward universal dominion. To a humble auditory of men and boys, gathered by chance—as on a wet day, or a Saturday afternoon, in the stoop of Keeler's tavern—he told about Putnam and the wolf, General Stark and his wife Molly, with variations of Washington and the war.

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present day, that we hear that instrument made the constant object of threatened nullification or repudiation.

Lewis and Clarke's Expedition to the Pacific, across the continent by way of the sources of the Missouri, began in 1803 and was completed in 1806. This was made the theme of great eulogy by the friends of Jefferson, whose scientific pretensions provoked abundance of ridicule in his opponents. In January, 1807, a dinner was given at Washington to Capt. Lewis, in compliment and congratulation for his success in the expedition. Joel Barlow produced a song on the occasion, full of ridiculous bombast. One verse will give an idea of it:

> "With the same soaring genius thy Lewis ascends,
> And seizes the car of the sun;
> O'er the sky-propping hills, and high waters he bends,
> And gives the proud earth a new zone."

This was sarcastically parodied by John Q. Adams, who did not disdain to make the domestic frailties of Jefferson the object of his satire. One verse is as follows, it having reference to Barlow's suggestion that the name of the Columbia river should be changed to Lewis' river.

> "Let Dusky Sally henceforth bear
> The name of Isabella:
> And let the mountains all of salt,
> Be christen'd Monticella.
> The hog with navel on his back,
> Tom Paine may be when drunk, sir:
> And Joel call'd the prairie dog,
> Which once was call'd a skunk, sir."

It is curious and instructive to know that soon after this (March, 1808), J. Q. Adams, having lost caste with the federalists of Massachusetts,

I have an impression that Lieut. Smith after all, was not very profound; but to me he was a miracle of learning. I listened to his discussions with very little interest, but his narratives engaged my whole attention. These were always descriptive of actual events, for he would have disdained fiction: from them I derived a satisfaction that I never found in fables. The travels of Mungo Park, his strange adventures and melancholy death—which about those days transpired through the newspapers, and all of which Lieutenant

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went to Jefferson, and accused them of treasonable designs, and was consequently made a good democrat, and sent as Minister to Russia in 1809. The transformations of politicians are often as wonderful as those of Harlequin.

The *Death of Alexander Hamilton*, July 11, 1804, in a duel with Aaron Burr, the Vice-President of the United States, produced the most vivid emotions of mingled regret and indignation. Hamilton, though in private life not without blemishes, was a man of noble character and vast abilities. Burr was in every thing false and unprincipled. He feared and envied Hamilton, and with the express purpose of taking his life, forced him into the conflict. Hamilton fell, fatally wounded, at the first fire, and Burr, like another Cain, fled to the South, and at last to Europe, before the indignation of the whole nation. After many years he returned—neglected, shunned, despised—yet lingering on to the year 1836, when at the age of eighty he died, leaving his blackened name to stand by the side of that of Benedict Arnold.

The *Attack of the British ship-of-war Leopard on the U. S. ship Chesapeake*, took place off Hampton Roads, in June, 1807. The latter, commanded by Commodore Barron, was just out of port, and apprehending no danger, was totally unprepared for action. The commander of the British vessel demanded four sailors of the Chesapeake, claimed to be deserters, and as these were not surrendered, he poured his broadsides into the American vessel, which was speedily disabled. He then took the four seamen, and the Chesapeake put back to Norfolk. This audacious act was perpetrated under the "right of search," as maintained by Great Britain. The indignation of the American people knew no bounds: Jefferson demanded apology, and the British government immediately offered it. It was not the policy of our President, however, to settle the matter with Great Britain: so this difficulty was kept along

Smith had at his tongue's end—excited my interest and my imagination even beyond the romances of Sinbad the Sailor and Robinson Crusoe.

In the year 1807, an event occurred, not only startling in itself, but giving exercise to all the philosophical powers of Lieutenant Smith. On the morning of the 14th of December, about daybreak, I had arisen and was occupied in building a fire, this being my daily duty. Suddenly the room was filled with light, and looking up, I saw through the windows a ball of fire, nearly the size of the moon, passing across the heavens from northwest to southeast. It was at an immense height, and of intense brilliancy. Having passed the zenith, it swiftly descended toward the earth: while still at a great elevation it burst, with three successive explosions, into fiery fragments. The report was like three claps of rattling thunder in quick succession.

My father, who saw the light and heard the sounds, declared it to be a meteor of extraordinary magnitude. It was noticed all over the town, and caused great excitement. On the following day the news came that huge fragments of stone had fallen in the adjacent town of Weston, some eight or ten

for years, and became a proverb, significant of delay and diplomatic chicanery. "*I would as soon attempt to settle the affair of the Chesapeake,*" was a common mode of characterizing any dispute which seemed interminable. Commodore Barron was suspended from his command, and it was some painful allusion to this by Commodore Decatur, that caused a duel between these two persons, which ended in the death of the latter, March 22, 1820.

miles southeast of Ridgefield. The story spread far and wide, and some of the professors of Yale College came to the place, and examined the fragments of this strange visitor from the skies. It appeared that the people in the neighborhood heard the rushing of the stones through the air, as well as the shock when they struck the earth. One, weighing two hundred pounds, fell on a rock, which it splintered—its huge fragments plowing up the ground around to the extent of a hundred feet. One piece, weighing twenty-five pounds, was taken to New Haven, where it is still to be seen, in the mineralogical cabinet of the college. The professors estimated this meteor* to be half a mile in diameter, and to have traveled through the heavens at the rate of two or three hundred miles a minute.

On this extraordinary occasion the lieutenant came to our house, according to his wont, and for several successive evenings discoursed to us upon the subject. I must endeavor to give you a specimen of his performances.

* The extraordinary meteor, here alluded to, was so distinctly observed, as to have settled many points respecting meteoric stones, which were before involved in some doubt. The immense speed of its progress and its enormous size were determined by the fact that it was seen at the moment of its explosion, through a space more than a hundred miles in diameter, and that it passed across the zenith in about ten seconds. It appears probable that it was not a solid mass, nor is it to be supposed that more than a small portion of it fell to the earth when the explosion took place. It must be admitted, however, that we have yet no satisfactory theory as to the origin and nature of these wonderful bodies.

"It seems to me, sir," said he, addressing my father, "that these meteors, or falling stars, or what not, are very strange things, and have not received due attention from the learned world. They are of great antiquity, sir: their appearance is recorded as far back as 654 B. C. One is spoken of by the elder Pliny, sir, which fell near the town of Gallipoli, in Asia Minor, about 405 B. C. This was to be seen in Pliny's time—that is, five hundred years afterward, and was then as big as a wagon, sir. From these remote dates down to the present time, these wonderful phenomena have occurred at intervals, so that two hundred instances are on record. It is probable that many more have passed unnoticed by man, either in the night, or in remote places, or in the vast oceans which cover two thirds of the earth's surface. In general, sir, these meteors send down showers of stones, of various sizes. Some of the fragments are no bigger than a pea; others are of greater magnitude—in one instance weighing twenty-five thousand pounds.

"Well, sir, this subject becomes one of importance, and the inquiry as to what these strange things are, demands attention of the philosopher. I have studied the subject profoundly; I have looked into the various theories, and am by no means satisfied with any of them, sir. Some suppose these meteors to be cast out of the volcanic craters of the moon, but that supposition I deem incompatible with Scripture, and the general aspect of the universe. The Bible represents

nature as harmonious: it speaks of the morning stars as singing together. It is impious, then, to suppose that the moon, a mere satellite of the earth, can be in a state of rebellion, and discharging its destructive batteries upon the earth, its lord and master. Besides, the moon thus constantly firing at the earth would, in the course of time, be all shot away."

"That is," said my father, "it would get out of ammunition, as the Americans did at Bunker Hill?"

"Just so, sir: therefore I look upon these as crude opinions, arising from a superficial view of the universe. I have examined the subject, sir, and am inclined to the opinion that these phenomena are animals revolving in the orbits of space between the heavenly bodies. Occasionally, one of them comes too near the earth, and rushing through our atmosphere with immense velocity, takes fire and explodes!"

"This is rather a new theory, is it not?" said my father. "It appears that these meteoric stones, in whatever country they fall, are composed of the same ingredients—mostly silex, iron, and nickel: these substances would make rather a hard character, if endowed with animal life, and especially with the capacity of rushing through space at the rate of two or three hundred miles a minute, and then exploding?"

"These substances I consider only as the shell of the animal, sir."

"You regard the creature as a huge shell-fish, then?"

"Not necessarily a fish, for a whole order of nature, called *Crustacea*, has the bones on the outside. In this case of meteors, I suppose them to be covered with some softer substance, for it frequently happens that a jelly-like matter comes down with meteoric stones. This resembles coagulated blood; and thus what is called bloody rain or snow, has often fallen over great spaces of country. Now, when the chemists analyze these things—the stones, which I consider the bones, and the jelly, which I consider the fat, and the rain, which I consider the blood—they find them all to consist of the same elements—that is, silex, iron, nickel, &c. None but my animal theory will harmonize all these phenomena, sir."

"But," interposed my father, "consider the enormous size of your aerial monsters. I recollect to have read only a short time since, that in the year 1803, about one o'clock in the afternoon, the inhabitants of several towns of Normandy, in France, heard noises in the sky, like the peals of cannon and musketry, with a long-continued roll of drums. Looking upward, they saw something like a small cloud at an immense elevation, which soon seemed to explode, sending its vapor in all directions. At last a hissing noise was heard, and then stones fell, spreading over a country three miles wide by eight miles long. No less than two thousand pieces were collected, weighing from one ounce to seventeen pounds. That must

have been rather a large animal—eight miles long and three miles wide!"

"What is that, sir, in comparison with the earth, which Kepler, the greatest philosopher that ever lived, conceived to be a huge beast?"

"Yes; but did he prove it?"

"He gave good reasons for it, sir. He found very striking analogies between the earth and animal existences: such as the tides, indicating its breathing through vast internal lungs; earthquakes, resembling eructations from the stomach; and volcanoes, suggestive of boils, pimples, and other cutaneous eruptions."

"I think I have seen your theory set to verse."

Saying this, my father rose, and bringing a book, read as follows:

"To me things are not as to vulgar eyes—
I would all nature's works anatomize:
This world a living monster seems to me,
Rolling and sporting in the aerial sea:
The soil encompasses her rocks and stones,
As flesh in animals encircles bones.
I see vast ocean, like a heart in play,
Pant systole and diastole every day,
And by unnumber'd *venus* streams supplied,
Up her broad rivers force the aerial tide.
The world's great lungs, monsoons and trade-winds show—
From east to west, from west to east they blow:
The hills are pimples, which earth's face defile,
And burning Etna an eruptive boil.
On her high mountains living forests grow,
And downy grass o'erspreads the vales below:

From her vast body perspirations rise,
Condense in clouds and float beneath the skies."*

My father having closed the book, the profound lieutenant, who did not conceive it possible that a thing so serious could be made the subject of a joke, said:

"A happy illustration of my philosophy, sir, though I can not commend the form in which it is put. If a man has any thing worth saying, sir, he should use prose. Poetry is only proper when one wishes to embellish folly, or dignify trifles. In this case it is otherwise, I admit; and I am happy to find so powerful a supporter of my animal theory of meteors. I shall consider the subject, and present it for the consideration of the philosophic world."

One prominent characteristic of this our Ridgefield philosopher was, that when a great event came about, he fancied that he had foreseen and predicted it from the beginning. Now about this time Fulton actually succeeded in his long-sought application of steam to

* This is from the "*Oration which might have been delivered*," by Francis Hopkinson, LL. D., published in a volume entitled, "*American Poems, selected and original*," Litchfield, Conn., 1793. This work I considered, in my youth, one of the marvels of American literature: in point of fact it comprised nearly all the living American poetry at that era. The chief names in its galaxy of stars were, Trumbull, the author of M'Fingal, Timothy Dwight, Joel Barlow, David Humphries, Lemuel Hopkins, William Livingston, Richard Alsop, Theodore Dwight, and Philip Freneau. It is now not without interest, especially as one of the signs of those times—the taste, tone, scope, and extent of the current indigenous poets and poetry—only sixty years ago. At that era Connecticut was the focal point of poetic inspiration on this continent

navigation. The general opinion of the country had been, all along, that he was a monomaniac, attempting an impossibility. He was the standing theme of cheap newspaper wit, and the general God-send of orators, who were hard run for a joke. Lieutenant Smith, who was only an echo of what passed around him, during the period of Fulton's labors, participated in the current contempt; but when the news came, in October, 1807, that he had actually succeeded—that one of his boats had walked the waters like a thing of life, at the rate of five miles an hour, against the current of the Hudson river—then, still an echo of the public voice—did he greatly jubilate.

"I told you so: I told you so!" was his first exclamation, as he entered the house, swelling with the account.

"Well, and what is it?" said my father.

"Fulton has made his boat go, sir! I told you how it would be, sir. It opens a new era in the history of navigation. We shall go to Europe in ten days, sir!"

Now you will readily understand, that in these sketches I do not pretend to report with literal precision the profound discourses of our Ridgefield savant; I remember only the general outlines, the rest being easily suggested. My desire is to present the portrait of one of the notables of our village—one whom I remember with pleasure, and whom I conceive to be a representative of the amiable, and per-

haps useful race of fussy philosophers to be found in most country villages. He was, in fact, a sort of Yankee Pickwick, full of knowledge, and a yearning desire to make everybody share in his learning. As was proper, he was a prophet, an "I-TOLD-YOU-SO!" who foresees every thing after it has happened. Unlike Mat Olmstead, who believed too little, perhaps he believed too much: for whatever he saw in print, he considered as proved. If he ever doubted any thing, it was when he had not been the first to reveal it to the village. Yet whatever his foibles, I was certainly indebted to him for many hours of amusement, and no doubt for a great deal of information.

From the town oracle, I turn to the town miser. Granther Baldwin, as I remember him, was threescore years and ten—perhaps a little more. He was a man of middle size, but thin, wiry, and bloodless, and having his body bent forward at a sharp angle with his hips, while his head was thrown back over his shoulders—giving his person the general form of a reversed letter Z. His complexion was brown and stony; his eye gray and twinkling, with a nose and chin almost meeting like a pair of forceps. His hair—standing out with an irritable frizz—was of a rusty gray. He was always restless, and walked and rode with a sort of haggish rapidity. At church, he wriggled in his seat, tasted fennel, and bobbed his head up and down and around. He could not afford tobacco, so he chewed, with a constant activity, either an oak chip or the

roots of elecampane, which was indigenous in the lane near his house. On Sundays he was decent in his attire, but on week-days he was a beggarly curiosity. It was said that he once exchanged hats with a scarecrow, and cheated scandalously in the bargain. His boots—a withered wreck of an old pair of white-tops—dangled over his shrunken calves, and a coat in tatters fluttered from his body. He rode a switch-tailed, ambling mare, which always went like the wind, shaking the old gentleman merrily from right to left, and making his bones, boots, and rags rustle like his own bush-harrow. Familiar as he was, the school-boys were never tired of him, and when he passed, "There goes Granther Baldwin!" was the invariable ejaculation.

I must add—in order to complete the picture—that in contrast to his elvish leanness and wizard activity, his wife was bloated with fat, and either from indolence or lethargy, dozed away half her life in the chimney corner. It was said, and no doubt truly, that she often went to sleep at the table, sometimes allowing a rind of bacon to stick out of her mouth till her nap was over. I have a faint notion of having seen this myself. She spent a large part of her life in cheating her husband out of *fourpence-ha'pennies*,* of which more than a peck were found secreted in an old chest, at her death.

* According to the old New England currency, the Spanish sixteenth of a dollar—the sixpence of New York and the picayune of Louisiana—

It was the boast of this man that he had risen from poverty to wealth, and he loved to describe the process of his advancement. He always worked in the corn-field till it was so dark that he could see his hoe strike fire. When in the heat of summer he was obliged occasionally to let his cattle breathe, he sat on a sharp stone, lest he should rest too long. He paid half a dollar to the parson for marrying him, which he always regretted, as one of his neighbors got the job done for a pint of mustard-seed. On fast-days, he made his cattle go without food as well as himself. He systematically stooped to save a crooked pin or a rusty nail, as it would cost more to make it than to pick it up. Such were his boasts—or at least, such were the things traditionally imputed to him.

He was withal a man of keen faculties; sagacious in the purchase of land, as well as in the rotation of crops. He was literally honest, and never cheated any one out of a farthing, according to his arithmetic—though he had sometimes an odd way of reckoning. It is said that in his day—the Connecticut age of blue—the statute imposed a fine of one dollar for profane swearing. During this period, Granther Baldwin employed a carpenter who was somewhat notoriously addicted to this vice. Granther kept a strict account of every instance of transgression, and when the job

was fourpence-halfpenny. This word was formerly the shibboleth of the Yankees—every one being set down as a New Englander who said *fourpence-ha'penny*.

was done, and the time came to settle the account, he said to the carpenter—

"You've worked with me thirty days, I think, Mr. Kellogg?"

"Yes, Granther," was the reply.

"At a dollar a day, that makes thirty dollars, I think?"

"Yes, Granther."

"Mr. Kellogg, I am sorry to observe that you have a very bad habit of taking the Lord's name in vain"

"Yes, Granther."

"Well, you know that's agin the law."

"Yes, Granther."

"And there's a fine of one dollar for each offense."

"Yes, Granther."

"Well—here's the account I've kept, and I find you've broken the law twenty-five times; that is, sixteen times in April, and nine in May. At a dollar a time, that makes twenty-five dollars, don't it?"

"Yes, Granther."

"So then, twenty-five from thirty leaves five: it appears, therefore, that there is a balance of five dollars due to you. How'll you take it, Mr. Kellogg? In cash, or in my way—say in 'taters, pork, and other things?"

At this point, the carpenter's brow lowered, but with a prodigious effort at composure, he replied—

"Well, Granther, you may keep the five dollars,

and I'll take it out in *my* way, that is, in swearing!" Upon this he hurled at the old gentleman a volley of oaths, quite too numerous and too profane to repeat.

Now I do not vouch for the precise accuracy of this story in its application to Granther Baldwin. I only say it was one of the things laid to him. A man of marked character is very apt to be saddled with all the floating tales that might suit him. I remember once to have told a well-authenticated story of Ethan Allen, when Dr. L..., a German professor, being present, laughed outright, saying, "I have heard my father tell the same story of old Baron Von Skippenhutten, and declare that he was present when the thing happened!"

I need not enlarge upon the adventures between Granther Baldwin and the school-boys, who took delight in pocketing his apples, pears, and nuts. These things were so abundant in those days, that everybody picked and ate, without the idea of trespass. But Granther's heart was sorely afflicted at these dispensations. He could not bear the idea of losing a pocketful of apples, or a handful of butternuts, chestnuts, or walnuts, even if they lay decaying in heaps upon his grounds. As I have said, his house and farm were close by West Lane school, and it was quite a matter of course that his hard, unrelenting conservatism should clash with the ideas of the natural rights of schoolboys, entertained by such

free-born youths as those at this seminary. They loved the fruit, and considered liberal pickings to be their birthright. Had the old gentleman let them alone, or had he smiled on them in their small pilferings, they had, no doubt, been moderate in their plunder. But when he made war on them—even unto sticks, stones, and pitchforks—the love of fun and the glory of mischief added an indescribable relish to their forays upon his woods and orchards. I confess to have been drawn in more than once to these misdoings. Perhaps, too, I was sometimes a leader in them. I confess, with all due contrition, that when the old miser, hearing the walnuts rattle down by the bushel in the forest back of his house —knowing that mischief was in the wind—came forth in a fury, pitchfork in hand; when I have heard his hoarse yet impotent threats; I have rather enjoyed than sympathized with his agonies. Poor old gentleman—let me now expiate my sins by doing justice to his memory!

It is true he was a miser—selfish and mean by nature. Born in poverty, and only rising from this condition by threescore years and ten of toil and parsimony, was it possible for him to be otherwise? What a burden of sin and misery is often laid upon a single soul! And yet Granther Baldwin was not wholly lost. He professed religion, and the New Man wrestled bravely with the Old Man. The latter got the better too often, no doubt; for avarice once lodged

in the soul is usually the last vice that capitulates to Christianity. It so readily assumes the guise of respectable virtues — frugality, providence, industry, prudence, economy—that it easily dupes the heart that gives it shelter.

And besides, religion in its sterner exercises forbids the pleasures of life, in which mankind generally content the universal craving for excitement. The moral constitution of man—the mind and the heart—have their hunger and their thirst as well as the body. These can not be annihilated: if they are not appeased in one way, they will be in another. Old Burton says they are like badgers: if you stop up one hole, they will dig out at another. And thus, if a man is too rigid in his creed to allow the genial excitements of society, he is very likely to satisfy himself with something worse. He generally resorts to secret indulgences of some kind, and thus lays the axe at the root of all religion, by establishing a system of hypocrisy. To a man thus situated, the respectable vice of avarice is commended, for while, as I have said, it takes the guise of various virtues, it furnishes gratification to the desire of excitement by its accumulations, its growing heaps of gold, its enlarging boundaries of land, its spreading network of bonds and mortgages, its web of debt woven at the rate of compound interest over the bodies and souls of men —debtors, borrowers, speculators, and other worshipers of Mammon.

It is so easy therefore to be misled by this demon of avarice, that I shall deal gently with it in Granther Baldwin's case, seeing that he had so many temptations in his nature and his position. Nevertheless, I am bound to say that it so dried up the fountains of his heart as to render him absolutely insensible even to the idea of personal appearance—as if God gave man his own image to wear a scarecrow's hat, and boots that a beggar would despise. But for his avarice, he might have discovered that want of decency is want of sense; but for his avarice, his heart might have been the sun of a system, circling around the fireside and diffusing its blessings over each member of the family; but for his avarice, he might, being rich, and increased in goods, have even enlarged his heart, and been the benefactor of the neighborhood.

Still, I shall not parade these sins before you: let me rather speak of the old man's virtues. He was a firm believer in the Bible, and set the example of implicit submission to its doctrines, as he discovered them. He made an open profession of his faith, and in sickness and in health, in rain and shine, in summer and winter, he sustained the established institutions of religion. No weather ever prevented him from attending church, though he lived nearly two miles from the place of worship. Often have I seen him on a Sunday morning, facing the keen blast, plodding his way thither, when it seemed as if his

heart must be reduced to an icicle. He attended all funerals within the precincts of the place. He was present at every town meeting: he paid his taxes, civil and ecclesiastical, at the appointed day. He kept thanksgivings and fasts—the first gingerly, and the last with all his heart. He had a clock and a noon-mark, and when they varied, he insisted that the sun was wrong. He believed profoundly in arithmetic, and submitted, without repining, to its decrees. Here was the skeleton of a man and a Christian; all that it wanted was a soul!

One sketch more, and my gallery of eccentricities is finished. Men hermits have been frequently heard of, but a woman hermit is of rare occurrence. Nevertheless, Ridgefield could boast of one of these among its curiosities. Sarah Bishop was, at the period of my boyhood, a thin, ghostly old woman, bent and wrinkled, but still possessing a good deal of activity. She lived in a cave, formed by nature, in a mass of projecting rocks that overhung a deep valley or gorge in West Mountain. This was about four miles from our house, and was, I believe, actually within the limits of North Salem; but being on the eastern slope of the mountain, it was most easily accessible from Ridgefield, and hence its tenant was called an inhabitant of our town.

This strange woman was no mere amateur recluse. The rock—bare and desolate—was actually her home, except that occasionally she strayed to the neighbor-

ing villages, seldom being absent more than one or two days at a time. She never begged, but received such articles as were given to her. She was of a highly religious turn of mind, and at long intervals came to our church, and partook of the sacrament. She sometimes visited our family—the only one thus favored in the town—and occasionally remained overnight. She never would eat with us at the table, nor engage in general conversation. Upon her early history she was invariably silent; indeed, she spoke of her affairs with great reluctance. She neither seemed to have sympathy for others, nor to ask it in return. If there was any exception, it was only in respect to the religious exercises of the family: she listened intently to the reading of the Bible, and joined with apparent devotion in the morning and evening prayer.

I have very often seen this eccentric personage stealing into the church, or moving along the street, or wending her way through lane and footpath up to her mountain home. She always appeared desirous of escaping notice, and though her step was active, she had a gliding, noiseless movement, which seemed to ally her to the spirit-world. In my rambles among the mountains, I have seen her passing through the forest, or sitting silent as a statue upon the prostrate trunk of a tree, or perchance upon a stone or mound, scarcely to be distinguished from the inanimate objects—wood, earth, and rock—around her. She had a sense of propriety as to personal appearance, for

when she visited the town, she was decently, though poorly clad; when alone in the wilderness she seemed little more than a squalid mass of rags. My excursions frequently brought me within the wild precincts of her solitary den. Several times I have paid a visit to the spot, and in two instances found her at home. A place more desolate—in its general outline—more absolutely given up to the wildness of nature, it is impossible to conceive. Her cave was a hollow in the rock, about six feet square. Except a few rags and an old basin, it was without furniture—her bed being the floor of the cave, and her pillow a projecting point of the rock. It was entered by a natural door about three feet wide and four feet high, and was closed in severe weather only by pieces of bark. At a distance of a few feet was a cleft, where she kept a supply of roots and nuts, which she gathered, and the food that was given her. She was reputed to have a secret depository, where she kept a quantity of antique dresses, several of them of rich silks, and apparently suited to fashionable life: though I think this was an exaggeration. At a little distance down the ledge, there was a fine spring of water, in the vicinity of which she was often found in fair weather.

There was no attempt, either in or around the spot, to bestow upon it an air of convenience or comfort. A small space of cleared ground was occupied by a few thriftless peach-trees, and in summer a patch of starveling beans, cucumbers, and potatoes. Up two or

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three of the adjacent forest-trees there clambered luxuriant grape-vines, highly productive in their season. With the exception of these feeble marks of cultivation, all was left ghastly and savage as nature made it. The trees, standing upon the tops of the cliff, and exposed to the shock of the tempest, were bent, and stooping toward the valley—their limbs contorted, and their roots clinging, as with an agonizing grasp, into the rifts of the rocks upon which they stood. Many of them were hoary with age, and hollow with decay; others were stripped of their leaves by the blasts, and others still, grooved and splintered by the lightning. The valley below, enriched with the decay of centuries, and fed with moisture from the surrounding hills, was a wild paradise of towering oaks, and other giants of the vegetable kingdom, with a rank undergrowth of tangled shrubs. In the distance, to the east, the gathered streams spread out into a beautiful expanse of water called Long Pond.

A place at once so secluded and so wild was, of course, the chosen haunt of birds, beasts, and reptiles. The eagle built her nest and reared her young in the clefts of the rocks; foxes found shelter in the caverns, and serpents reveled alike in the dry hollows of the cliffs, and the dank recesses of the valley. The hermitess had made companionship with these brute tenants of the wood. The birds had become so familiar with her, that they seemed to heed her almost as little as if she had been a stone. The

fox fearlessly pursued his hunt and his gambols in her presence. The rattlesnake hushed his monitory signal as he approached her. Such things, at least, were entertained by the popular belief. It was said, indeed, that she had domesticated a particular rattlesnake, and that he paid her daily visits. She was accustomed—so said the legend—to bring him milk from the villages, which he devoured with great relish.

It will not surprise you that a subject like this should have given rise to one of my first poetical efforts—the first verses, in fact, that I ever published. I gave them to Brainard, then editor of the Mirror, at Hartford, and he inserted them, probably about the year 1823. I have not a copy of them, and can only recollect the following stanzas:

For many a year the mountain hag
Was a theme of village wonder,
For she made her home in the dizzy crag,
Where the eagle bore his plunder.

Up the beetling cliff she was seen at night
Like a ghost to glide away;
But she came again with the morning light,
From the forest wild and gray.

Her face was wrinkled, and passionless seem'd,
As her bosom, all blasted and dead—
And her colorless eye like an icicle gleam'd,
Yet no sorrow or sympathy shed.

Her long snowy locks, as the winter drift,
On the wind were backward cast;
And her shrivel'd form glided by so swift,
You had said 'twere a ghost that pass'd.

Her house was a cave in a giddy rock,
That o'erhung a lonesome vale;
And 'twas deeply scarr'd by the lightning's shock,
And swept by the vengeful gale.

As alone on the cliff she musingly sate—
The fox at her fingers would snap;
The crow would sit on her snow-white pate,
And the rattlesnake coil in her lap.

The night-hawk look'd down with a welcome eye,
As he stoop'd in his airy swing;
And the haughty eagle hover'd so nigh,
As to fan her long locks with his wing.

But when winter roll'd dark his sullen wave,
From the west with gusty shock,
Old Sarah, deserted, crept cold to her cave,
And slept without bed in her rock.

No fire illumined her dismal den,
Yet a tatter'd Bible she read;
For she saw in the dark with a wizard ken,
And talk'd with the troubled dead.

And often she mutter'd a foreign name,
With curses too fearful to tell,
And a tale of horror—of madness and shame—
She told to the walls of her cell!

I insert these lines—not as claiming any praise, nor as rigidly accurate in the delineation of their subject—but as a sketch of the impressions she made upon the public mind, vividly reflected by my own imagination.

The facts in respect to this Nun of the Mountain were indeed strange enough without any embellish-

ments of fancy. During the winter she was confined for several months to her cell. At that period she lived upon roots and nuts, which she had laid in for the season. She had no fire, and, deserted even by her brute companions, she was absolutely alone, save that she seemed to hold communion with the invisible world. She appeared to have no sense of solitude, no weariness at the slow lapse of days and months: night had no darkness, the tempest no terror, winter no desolation, for her. When spring returned, she came down from her mountain, a mere shadow—each year her form more bent, her limbs more thin and wasted, her hair more blanched, her eye more colorless. At last life seemed ebbing away like the faint light of a lamp, sinking into the socket. The final winter came—it passed, and she was not seen in the villages around. Some of the inhabitants went to the mountain, and found her standing erect, her feet sunk in the frozen marsh of the valley. In this situation, being unable, as it appeared, to extricate herself—alone, yet not alone—she had yielded her breath to Him who gave it!

The early history of this strange personage was involved in some mystery. So much as this, however, was ascertained, that she was of good family, and lived on Long Island. During the Revolutionary war —in one of the numerous forays of the British soldiers —her father's house was burned; and, as if this were not enough, she was made the victim of one of those

demoniacal acts, which in peace are compensated by the gibbet, but which, in war, embellish the life of the soldier. Desolate in fortune, blighted at heart, she fled from human society, and for a long time concealed her sorrows in the cavern which she had accidentally found. Her grief—softened by time, perhaps alleviated by a vail of insanity—was at length so far mitigated, that, although she did not seek human society, she could endure it. The shame of her maidenhood—if not forgotten—was obliterated by her rags, her age, and her grisly visage—in which every gentle trace of her sex had disappeared. She continued to occupy her cave till the year 1810 or 1811, when she departed, in the manner I have described, and we may hope, for a brighter and happier existence.

LETTER XX.

A Long Farewell—A Return—Ridgefield as it is—The Past and Present Compared.

My dear C******

In the autumn of 1808 an event occurred which suddenly gave a new direction to my life, and took me from Ridgefield, never to return to it, but as a visitor. My narrative is therefore about to take a final leave of my birthplace, but before I say farewell, let me give you a hasty sketch of it, as it now is—or as it

appeared to me last summer—after a long absence. My brother had set out with me to pay it a visit, but at New Haven he was taken ill, and returned to his home at Hartford. I pursued my journey, and a few days after, gave him a rapid sketch of my observations, in a letter—which I beg leave here to copy.

New York, August 20, 1855.

Dear Brother:

I greatly regret that you could not continue your journey with us to Ridgefield. The weather was fine, and the season—crowning the earth with abundance—made every landscape beautiful. The woods which, as you know, abound along the route, spread their intense shade over the land, thus mitigating the heat of the unclouded sun; and the frequent fields of Indian corn, with their long leaves and silken tassels, all fluttering in the breeze, gave a sort of holiday-look to the scene. Of all agricultural crops this is the most picturesque and the most imposing. Let others magniloquize upon the vineyards of France and the olive orchards of Italy: I parted with these scenes a few weeks since, and do not hesitate to say, that, as a spectacle to the eye, our maize fields are infinitely superior. Leaving New Haven by rail, we reached Norwalk in forty minutes; an hour after we were at Ridgefield—having journeyed three miles by stage, from the Danbury and Norwalk station. Thus we performed a journey, in less than two hours, which cost a day's travel in our boyhood. You can well comprehend that we had a good time of it.

As I approached the town, I began to recognize localities—roads, houses, and hills. I was in a glow of excitement, for it was nineteen years since I had visited the place, and there was a mixture of the strange and familiar all around, which was at once pleasing and painful; pleasing, because it revived many cherished memories, and painful, because it suggested that time

is a tomb, into which man and his works are ever plunging, like a stream flowing on, only to disappear in an unfathomable gulf. The bright village of to-day is in fact the graveyard of the past generation. I was here like one risen from the dead, and come to look on the place which I once knew, but which I shall soon know no more. All seemed to me a kind of dream—half real and half imaginary—now presenting some familiar and cherished remembrance, and now mocking me with strange and baffling revelations.

Nevertheless, all things considered, I enjoyed the scene. The physiognomy of the town—a swelling mound of hills, rising in a crescent of mountains—was all as I had learned it by heart in childhood. To the north, the bending line of Aspen Ledge; to the east, the Redding Hills; to the west, the Highlands of the Hudson; to the south, the sea of forest-crowned undulations, sloping down to Long Island Sound,—all in a cool but brilliant August sun, and all tinted with intense verdure, presented a scene to me—the pilgrim returning to his birthplace—of unrivaled interest.

In general the whole country seemed embowered in trees—fresh and exuberant, and strongly in contrast with the worn-out lands of the old countries—with openings here and there upon hillside and valley, consisting of green meadow, or pasture, or blooming maize, or perhaps patches of yellow stubble, for the smaller grains had been already harvested. As I came within the precincts of the village, I could not but admire the fields, as well on account of their evident richness of soil and excellent cultivation, as their general neatness. The town, you know, was originally blessed or cursed, as the case may be, by a most abundant crop of stones. To clear the land of these was the Herculean task of the early settlers. For many generations, they usurped the soil, obstructed the plow, dulled the scythe, and now, after ages of labor, they are formed into sturdy walls, neatly laid, giving to the entire landscape an aspect not only of comfort, but refinement. In our day, these were rudely

piled up with frequent breaches—the tempting openings for vagrant sheep, and loose, yearling cattle. No better evidence can be afforded of a general progress and improvement, than that most of these have been relaid with something of the art and nicety of mason-work. The Mat Olmsteads and Azor Smiths of the past half century, who laid stone wall for Granther Baldwin and General King at a dollar a rod, would be amazed to see that the succeeding generation has thrown their works aside in disgust, and replaced them by constructions having somewhat of the solidity and exactitude of fortifications.

As we passed along, I observed that nearly all the houses which existed when we were boys, had given place to new, and for the most part larger, structures. Here and there was an original dwelling. A general change had passed over the land: swamps had been converted into meadows; streams that sprawled across the path, now flowed tidily beneath stone bridges; little shallow ponds—the haunts of muddling geese—had disappeared: the undergrowth of woods and copses had been cleared away; briers and brambles, once thick with fruit, or abounding in birds'-nests, or perchance the hiding-place of snakes, had been extirpated, and corn and potatoes flourished in their stead. In one place, where I recollected to have unearthed a woodchuck, I saw a garden, and among its redolent pumpkins, cucumbers, and cabbages, was a row of tomatoes—a plant which in my early days was only known as a strange exotic, producing little red balls, which bore the enticing name of love-apples!

At last we came into the main street. This is the same—yet not the same. All the distances seemed less than as I had marked them in my memory. From the meeting-house to 'Squire Keeler's—which I thought to be a quarter of a mile—it is but thirty rods. At the same time the undulations seemed more frequent and abrupt. The old houses are mostly gone, and more sumptuous ones are in their place. A certain neatness and elegance have succeeded to the plain and primitive characteristics of other days.

The street, on the whole, is one of the most beautiful I know of. It is more than a mile in length and a hundred and twenty feet in width, ornamented with two continuous lines of trees—elms, sycamores, and sugar-maples—save only here and there a brief interval. Some of these, in front of the more imposing houses, are truly majestic. The entire street is carpeted with a green sod, soft as velvet to the feet. The high-road runs in the middle, with a foot-walk on either side. These passages are not paved, but are covered with gravel, and so neatly cut, that they appear like pleasure-grounds. All is so bright and so tasteful that you might expect to see some imperative sign-board, warning you, on peril of the law, not to tread upon the grass. Yet, as I learned, all this embellishment flows spontaneously from the choice of the people, and not from police regulations.

The general aspect of the street, however, let me observe, is not sumptuous, like Hartford and New Haven, or even Fairfield. There is still a certain quaintness and primness about the place. Here and there you see old respectable houses, showing the dim vestiges of ancient paint, while the contiguous gardens, groaning with rich fruits and vegetables, and the stately rows of elms in front, declare it to be taste, and not necessity, that thus cherishes the reverend hue of unsophisticated clapboards, and the venerable rust with which time baptizes unprotected shingles. There is a stillness about the town which lends favor to this characteristic of studied rusticity. There is no fast driving, no shouting, no railroad whistle—for you must remember that the station of the Danbury and Norwalk line is three miles off. Few people are to be seen in the streets, and those who do appear move with an air of leisure and tranquillity. It would seem dull and almost melancholy were it not that all around is so thrifty, so tidy, so really comfortable. Houses—white or brown—with green window-blinds, and embowered in lilacs and fruit-trees, and seen beneath the arches of wide-spreading American elms—the finest of the whole elm family—can never be otherwise than cheerful.

I went of course to the old Keeler tavern, for lodgings. The sign was gone, and though the house retained its ancient form, it was so neatly painted, and all around had such a look of repose, that I feared it had ceased from its ancient hospitalities. I, however, went to the door and rapped: it was locked! A bad sign, thought I. Ere long, however, a respectable dame appeared, turned the key, and let me in. It was Anne Keeler converted into Mrs. Ressequie. Had it been her mother, I should only have said that she had grown a little taller and more dignified: as it was, the idea crossed my mind—

"Fanny was younger once than she is now!"

But it seemed to me that her matronly graces fully compensated for all she might have lost of earlier pretensions. She looked at me gazingly, as if she half knew me. She was about inquiring my name, when I suggested that she might call me Smith, and begged her to tell me if she could give me lodgings. She replied that they did sometimes receive strangers, though they did not keep a tavern. I afterward heard that the family was rich, and that it was courtesy more than cash, which induced them to keep up the old habit of the place. I was kindly received, though at first as a stranger. After a short time I was found out, and welcomed as a friend. What fragrant butter, what white bread, what delicious succotash they gave me! And as to the milk—it was just such as cows gave fifty years ago, and upon the slightest encouragement positively produced an envelope of golden cream! Alas! how cows have degenerated—especially in the great cities of the earth,—in New York, London, or Paris—it is all the same. He who wishes to eat with a relish that the Astor House or Morley's or the Grand Hotel du Louvre can not give, should go to Ridgefield, and put himself under the care of Mrs. Ressequie. If he be served, as I was, by her daughter—a thing, however, that I can not promise—he may enjoy a lively and pleasant conversation while he discusses his meal. When you go there —as go you must—do not forget to order ham and eggs, for they

are such as we ate in our childhood—not a mass of red leather steeped in grease, and covered with a tough, bluish gum—as is now the fashion in these things. As to blackberry and huckleberry pies, and similar good gifts, you will find them just such as our mother made fifty years ago, when these bounties of Providence were included in the prayer—"Give us this day our daily bread," and were a worthy answer to such a petition.

Immediately after my arrival, waiting only to deposit my carpet-bag in my room, I set out to visit our house—our former home. As I came near I saw that the footpath we had worn across Deacon Benedict's lot to shorten the distance from the street, had given place to a highway. I entered this, and was approaching the object of my visit, when I was overtaken by a young man, walking with a long stride.

"Whose house is this on the hill?" said I.

"It is mine," was the reply.

"Indeed; you must have a fine view from your upper windows?"

"Yes, the view is famous, and the house itself is somewhat noted. It was built by Peter Parley, and here he lived many years!"

By this time we had reached the place. The stranger, after I had looked at the premises a few moments, said, "Perhaps you would like to ascend the hill to the north, from which the view is very extensive?" I gave assent, and we went thither—soon finding ourselves in the old Keeler lot, on the top of High Ridge, so familiar to our youthful rambles. With all the vividness of my early recollections, I really had no adequate idea of the beauty of the scene, as now presented to us. The circle of view was indeed less than I had imagined, for I once thought it immense; but the objects were more striking, more vividly tinted, more picturesquely disposed. Long Island Sound, which extends for sixty miles before the eye, except as it is hidden here and there by intercepting hills and trees, seems nearer than it did to the inexperienced vision of my childhood. I could distinguish the differ-

ent kinds of vessels on the water, and the island itself—stretched out in a long blue line beyond—presented its cloud-like tissues of forest, alternating with patches of yellow sandbanks along the shore. I could distinctly indicate the site of Norwalk; and the spires peering through the mass of trees to the eastward, spoke suggestively of the beautiful towns and villages that line the northern banks of the Sound.

West Mountain seemed nearer and less imposing than I had imagined, but the sea of mountains beyond, terminating in the Highlands of the Hudson, more than fulfilled my remembrances. The scene has no abrupt and startling grandeur from this point of view, but in that kind of beauty which consists in blending the peace and quietude of cultivated valleys with the sublimity of mountains—all in the enchantment of distance, and all mantled with the vivid hues of summer—it equals the fairest scenes in Italy. The deep blue velvet which is thrown over our northern landscapes, differs indeed from the reddish-purple of the Apennines, but it is in all things as poetic, as stimulating to the imagination, as available to the painter, as suggestive to the poet—to all, indeed, who feel and appreciate the truly beautiful. As I gazed upon this lovely scene, how did the memories of early days come back, clothed in the romance of childhood! I had then no idea of distance beyond these mountains; no conception of landscape beauty, no idea of picturesque sublimity—that surpassed what was familiar to me here. Indeed, all my first measures of grandeur and beauty, in nature, were formed upon these glorious models, now before me. How often have I stood upon this mound, at the approach of sunset, and gazed in speechless wonder upon yonder mountains, glowing as they were in the flood of sapphire which was then poured upon them! I pray you to excuse my constant reference to foreign lands; but as I have just left them, it is natural to make comparisons with these objects, familiar to my childhood. Let me say, then, that no sunsets surpass our own in splendor, nor have I seen any thing to equal them in brilliancy, when the retiring orb of day, as if to shed

glory upon his departure, pours his rays upon the outstretched fleece of clouds, and these reflect their blaze upon the mountain landscape, below. Then, for a brief space, as you know, the heavens seem a canopy of burnished gold, and the earth beneath a kingdom robed in purple velvet, and crowned with rubies and sapphires. In Italy, the sunset sky has its enchantments, but while these perhaps surpass the same exhibitions of nature in our climate, in respect to a certain tranquil softness and exquisite blending of rainbow hues, they are still inferior, in gorgeous splendor, to the scenes which I have been describing.

Having taken a hasty but earnest view of the grand panorama of High Ridge, I returned with my guide to the house. I feigned thirst, and begged a glass of water. This was readily given, and I tasted once more the nectar of our "old oaken bucket." After glancing around, and making a few observations, I thanked my attendant for his courtesy—who, by the way, had no suspicion that I knew the place as well as himself—and took my leave, and returned to the hotel. My emotions upon thus visiting our early home—so full of the liveliest associations—it would be utterly in vain to attempt to describe.

It was now Saturday evening, which I spent quietly with my host and his family, in talking over old times. In the morning I rose early, for it seemed a sin to waste such hours as these. Standing on the northern stoop of the Keeler tavern, I looked upon the beautiful landscape bounded by the Redding and Danbury hills, and saw the glorious march of morning over the scene. The weather was clear, and the serenity of the Sabbath was in the breath of nature: even the breezy morn soon subsided into stillness, as if the voice of God hallowed it. The birds seemed to know that He rested on this seventh day. As the sun came up, the fluttering leaves sank into repose: no voice of lowing herd or baying hound broke over the hills. All was silent and motionless in the street: every thing seemed to feel that solemn command—Remember the Sabbath-day!—save only a strapping Shanghai cock in Mr. Lewis's yard over the way, which strut-

ted, crowed, and chased the hens—like a very Mormon—evidently caring for none of these things.

At nine o'clock the first bell rang. The first stroke told me that it was not the same to which my childish ear was accustomed. Upon inquiry, I learned that on a certain Fourth of July, some ten years back, it was rung so merrily as to be cracked! Had any one asked me who was likely to have done this, I should have said J . . . . H . . . . ., and he indeed it was. With a good-will, however, quite characteristic of him, he caused it to be replaced by a new one, and though its tone is deeper, and even more melodious than the old one, I felt disappointed, and a shade of sadness came over my mind.

On going into the meeting-house, I found it to be totally changed. The pulpit, instead of being at the west, was at the north, and the galleries had been transposed to suit this new arrangement. The Puritan pine color of the pews had given way to white paint. The good old oaken floor was covered by Kidderminster carpets. The choir, instead of being distributed into four parts, and placed on different sides of the gallery, was all packed together in a heap. Instead of Deacon Hawley for chorister, there was a young man who "knew not Joseph," and in lieu of a pitch-pipe to give the key, there was a melodeon to lead the choir. Instead of Mear, Old Hundred, Aylesbury, Montgomery, or New Durham—songs full of piety and pathos, and in which the whole congregation simultaneously joined—they sang modern tunes, whose name and measure I did not know. The performance was artistic and skillful, but it seemed to lack the unction of a hearty echo from the bosom of the assembly, as was the saintly custom among the fathers.

The congregation was no less changed than the place itself, for remember, I had not been in this building for five and forty years. The patriarchs of my boyhood—Deacon Olmstead, Deacon Benedict, Deacon Hawley, Granther Baldwin, 'Squire Keeler, Nathan Smith—were not there, nor were their types in their places. A few gray-haired men I saw, having dim and fleeting semblances

to these Anakims of my youthful imagination, but who they were, I could not tell. I afterward heard that most of them were the companions of my early days, now grown to manhood and bearing the impress of their parentage—blent with vestiges of their youth—thus at once inciting and baffling my curiosity. For the most part, however, the assembly was composed of a new generation. In several instances I felt a strange sort of embarrassment as to whether the person I saw was the boy grown up or the papa grown down. It produces a very odd confusion of ideas to realize in an old man before you, the playmate of your childhood, whom you had forgotten for forty years, but who in that time has been trudging along in life, at the same pace as yourself. At first, every thing looked belittled, degenerated in dimensions. The house seemed small, the galleries low, the pulpit mean. The people appeared Lilliputian. These impressions soon passed off, and I began to recognize a few persons around me. William Hawley is just as you would have expected; his hair white as snow, his countenance mild, refined, cheerful, though marked with threescore and ten. Irad Hawley, though he has his residence in "Fifth Avenue," spends his summers here, and begins now to look like his father the deacon. I thought I discovered Gen. King in an erect and martial form in one of the pews, but it proved to be his son Joshua—who now occupies the family mansion, and worthily stands at the head of the house. As I came out of church, I was greeted with many hearty shakes of the hand, but in most cases I could with difficulty remember those who thus claimed recognition.

The discourse was very clever, and thoroughly orthodox, as it should be, for I found that the Confession and Covenant of 1750 were still in force, just as our father left them. Even the eleventh article stands as it was—"You believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a day of judgment, in which God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ; when the righteous shall be acquitted and received to eternal life, and

the wicked shall be sentenced to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

I was, I confess, not a little shocked to hear the account the minister gave of the church members, for he declared that they were full of evil thoughts—envy, jealousy, revenge, and all uncharitableness. He said he knew all about it, and could testify that they were a great deal worse than the world in general believed, or conceived them to be. Indeed, he affirmed that it took a real experimental Christian to understand how totally depraved they were. I was consoled at finding that this was not the settled minister—Mr. Clark—but a missionary, accustomed to preach in certain lost places in that awful Babylon, called New York. Perhaps the sermon was adapted to the people it was designed for, but it seemed ill suited to the latitude and longitude of such a quaint, primitive parish as Ridgefield, which is without an oyster-cellar, a livery stable, a grog-shop, a lawyer, a broker, a drunkard, or a profane swearer.

This circumstance reminded me of an itinerant Boanerges, who, in his migrations, half a century ago, through western New York, was requested to prepare a sermon to be preached at the execution of an Indian, who had been convicted of murder, and was speedily to be hung. This he complied with, but the convict escaped, and the ceremony did not take place. The preacher, however, not liking to have so good a thing lost, delivered it the next Sabbath to a pious congregation in the Western Reserve, where he chanced to be—stating that it was composed for a hanging, but as that did not take place, he would preach it now, presuming that it would be found appropriate to the occasion!

In the afternoon we had a begging sermon from a young converted Jew, who undertook to prove that his tribe was the most interesting in the world, and their conversion the first step toward the millennium. After the sermon they took up a contribution to aid him in getting an education; he also sold a little story-book of his conversion at twelve and a half cents a copy, for the benefit of his converted sister. I have no objection to

Jews, converted or unconverted, but I must say that my reverence for the house of God is such that I do not like to hear there the chink of copper, which generally prevails in a contribution-box. Even that of silver and gold has no melody for me, in such a place. It always reminds me painfully of those vulgar pigeon dealers who were so summarily and so properly scourged out of the Temple.

The old dilapidated Episcopal church, which you remember on the main street—a church not only without a bishop, but without a congregation—has given place to a new edifice and stated services, with a large and respectable body of worshipers. The Methodists, who were wont to assemble, fifty years ago, in Dr. Baker's kitchen, have put up a new house, white and bright, and crowded every Sabbath with attentive listeners. This church numbers two hundred members, and is the largest in the place. Though, in its origin, it seemed to thrive upon the outcasts of society—its people are now as respectable as those of any other religious society in the town. No longer do they choose to worship in barns, schoolhouses, and byplaces: no longer do they affect leanness, long faces, and loose, uncombed hair: no longer do they cherish bad grammar, low idioms, and the euphony of a nasal twang, in preaching. Their place of worship is in good taste and good keeping: their dress is comely, and in the fashion of the day. The preacher is a man of education, refinement, and dignity, and he and the Rev. Mr. Clark—our father's successor—exchange pulpits, and call each other brother! Has not the good time come?

On Monday morning, I took a wide range over the town with Joshua King, who, by the way, is not only the successor, but in some things the repetition of his father. He represents him in person—as I have already intimated—and has many of his qualities. He has remodeled the grounds around the old family mansion, amplifying and embellishing them with much judgment The house itself is unchanged, except by paint and the introduction of certain articles of furniture and tasteful decorations—tes-

timonials of the proprietor's repeated visits to Europe. Here, being a bachelor, he has gathered some of his nieces, and here he receives the members of the King dynasty down to the third generation—all seeming to regard it as the Jerusalem of the family. The summer gathering is delightful, bringing hither the refinements of the best society of New York, Philadelphia, and other places. Here I spent some pleasant hours, meeting, of course, many of the neighbors, who came to see me with almost as much curiosity as if I had been the veritable Joyce Heth.

In all parts of the town I was struck with the evidences of change—gentle, gradual, it is true—but still bespeaking the lapse of half a century. Along the main street, the general outline of things is the same, but, in detail, all is transformed, or at least modified. Most of the old houses have disappeared, or have undergone such mutations as hardly to be recognized. New and more expensive edifices are scattered here and there. If you ask who are the proprietors, you will be told—Dr. Perry, Joshua King, Nathan Smith—but they are not those whom we knew by these names—they are their sons, perhaps their grandsons. Master Stebbins's schoolhouse is swept away, and even the pond across the road—the scene of many a school-day frolic—is evaporated! I am constantly struck with the general desiccation which has passed over the place; many of the brooks, which formed our winter skating and sliding places, have vanished. I looked in vain for the pool back of Deacon John Benedict's house—which I always imagined to be the scene of the ballad:

> "What shall we have for dinner, Mrs. Bond?
> There's beef in the larder and ducks in the pond:
> Dill, dill, dill, dill, dilled,
> Come here and be killed!"

Col. Bradley's house, that seemed once so awful and so exclusive, is now a dim, rickety, and tenantless edifice, for sale, with

all its appurtenances, for twenty-five hundred dollars! Is it not strange to see this once proud tenement, the subject of blight and decay, and that too in the midst of general prosperity? Nor is this all: it has just been the subject of a degrading hoax. I must tell you the story, for it will show you that the march of progress has invaded even Ridgefield.

About three days since there appeared in the village, a man claiming to be the son-in-law of George Law. In a mysterious manner he agreed to buy the Bradley estate. With equal mystery, he contracted to purchase several other houses in the vicinity. It then leaked out that a grand speculation was on foot: there was to be a railroad through Ridgefield; the town was to be turned into a city, and a hotel, resembling the Astor House, was to take the place of the old dilapidated shell now upon the Bradley premises! An electric feeling soon ran through the village; speculation began to swell in the bosom of society. Under this impulse, rocks rose, rivers doubled, hills mounted, valleys oscillated. This sober town—anchored in everlasting granite, having defied the shock of ages—now trembled in the hysterical balance of trade.

Two days passed, and the bubble burst; the puff-ball was punctured; the sham son-in-law of George Law was discovered to be a lawless son of a pauper of Danbury. All his operations were in fact a hoax. At twelve o'clock on Saturday night he was seized, and taken from his bed by an independent corps under Capt. Lynch. They tied him fast to a buttonwood-tree in the main street, called the Liberty Pole.

> "No man e'er felt the halter draw,
> In good opinion of the law:"

At all events, the prisoner deemed it a great incongruity to use an institution consecrated to the rights of man and the cause of freedom, for the purpose of depriving him of the power to seek happiness in his own way; so about ten o'clock on Sunday morning—finding it unpleasant to be in this situation while the

people went by, shaking their heads, on their way to church—he managed to get out his penknife, cut his cords, and make a bee-line for South Salem.

Farther on, proceeding northward, I found that Dr. Baker's old house—its kitchen the cradle of Ridgefield Methodism—had departed, and two or three modern edifices were near its site. Master Stebbins's house*—from its elevated position at the head of the street, seeming like the guardian genius of the place—still stands, venerable alike from its dun complexion, its antique form, and its historical remembrances. Its days may be set at a hundred years, and hence it is an antiquity in our brief chronology. It almost saw the birth of Ridgefield: it has probably looked down upon the building of every other edifice in the street. It presided over the fight of 1777. Close by, Arnold's horse was shot under him, and he, according to tradition, made a flying leap over a six-barred gate, and escaped. Near its threshold the British cannon was planted, which sent a ball into the north-eastern corner-post of 'Squire Keeler's tavern, and which, covered up by a sliding shingle, as a relic too precious for the open air, is still to be seen there.

The old house I found embowered in trees—some, primeval elms, spreading their wide branches protectingly over the roof, stoop, and foreground; others—sugar-maples, upright, symmetrical, and deeply verdant, as is the wont of these beautiful children of our American forest. Other trees—apples, pears, peaches, and plums, bending with fruit—occupied the orchard grounds back of the house. The garden at the left seemed a jubilee of tomatoes, beets, squashes, onions, cucumbers, beans, and pumpkins. A vine of the latter had invaded a peach-tree, and a huge oval pumpkin, deeply ribbed, and now emerging from its bronze hue into a golden yellow, swung aloft as if to proclaim the victory. By the porch was a thick clambering grape-vine, presenting its

* For an engraving of this building, see Lossing's Field Book, vol. i. p. 409.

purple bunches almost to your mouth, as you entered the door. I knocked, and Anne Stebbins, my former schoolmate, let me in. She was still a maiden, in strange contrast to the prolific and progressive state of all around. She did not know me, but when I told her how I once saw her climb through the opening in the schoolhouse wall, overhead, and suggested the blue-mixed hue of her stockings—she rallied, and gave me a hearty welcome.

You will no doubt, in some degree, comprehend the feelings with which I rambled over these scenes of our boyhood, and you will forgive, if you can not approve, the length of this random epistle. I will trespass but little further upon your patience. I must repeat, that the general aspect of the town, in respect to its roads, churches, houses, lands—all show a general progress in wealth, taste, and refinement. Nor is this advance in civilization merely external. William Hawley—a most competent judge, as he has been the leading merchant of the place for forty years—mentioned some striking evidences of this. At the beginning of this century, most of the farmers were in debt, and a large part of their lands were under mortgage: now not four farms in the place are thus encumbered. Then it was the custom for the men to spend a good deal of their time, and especially in winter, at the stores and taverns, in tippling and small gambling. This practice has ceased. Drunkenness, profane swearing, Sabbath-breaking, noisy night rows, which were common, are now almost wholly unknown. There are but two town paupers, and these are not indigenous. Education is better, higher in its standard, and is nearly universal. Ideas of comfort in the modes of life are more elevated, the houses are improved, the furniture is more convenient and more abundant. That religion has not lost its hold on the conscience, is evident from the fact that three flourishing churches exist; that the duties of patriotism are not forgotten, is evinced by a universal attendance at the polls on election days; at the same time it is clear that religious and political discussions have lost their acerbity—thus leaving the feel-

ing of good neighborhood more general, and the tone of humanity in all things more exalted.

Is there not encouragement, hope, in these things—for Ridgefield is not alone in this forward march of society? It is in the general tide of prosperity—economical, social, and moral—but an example of what has been going on all over New England—perhaps over the whole country. We hear a great deal of the iniquities in the larger cities; but society even there, is not worse than formerly: these places—their houses, streets, prisons, brothels—are exhausted, as by an air-pump, of all their doings, good and bad, and the seething mass of details is doled out day after day, by the penny press, to appease the hunger and thirst of society for excitement. Thus, what was once hidden is now thrown open, and seems multiplied and magnified by a dozen powerful lenses—each making the most of it, and seeking to outdo all others in dressing up the show for the public taste. If you will make the comparison, you will see that, now, tipping over an omnibus, or the foundering of a ferry-boat, takes up more space in a newspaper, than did six murders or a dozen conflagrations fifty years ago. Then the world's doings could be dispatched in a weekly folio of four pages, with pica type; now they require forty pages of brevier, every day. Our population is increased—doubled, quadrupled, if you please—but the newspaper press has enlarged its functions a thousandfold. It costs more paper and print to determine whether a policeman of New York, was born in England or the United States, than are usually consumed in telling the story of the Revolutionary war. This institution—the Press—has, in fact, become a microscope and a mirror—seeing all, magnifying all, reflecting all—until at last it requires a steady brain to discover in its shifting and passing panoramas, the sober, simple truth. So far as the subject of which I am writing is concerned, I am satisfied that if our cities seem more corrupt than formerly, it is only in appearance and not in reality. If we hear more about the vices of society, it is because, in the first place, things are more ex-

posed to the public view, and in the next place, the moral standards are higher, and hence these evils are made the subject of louder and more noticeable comment. These obvious suggestions will solve whatever difficulty there may be in adopting my conclusions.

But however the fact may be as to our larger cities, it can not be doubted that all over New England, at least, there has been a quiet, but earnest and steady march of civilization—especially within the last forty years. The war of 1812 was disastrous to our part of the country; disastrous, I firmly believe, to our whole country. In New England it checked the natural progress of society, it impoverished the people, it debased their manners, it corrupted their hearts. Let others vaunt the glory of war; I shall venture to say what I have seen and known. We have now had forty years of peace, and the happy advances I have noticed—bringing increased light and comfort in at every door, rich or poor, to bless the inhabitants—are its legitimate fruits. The inherent tendency of our New England society is to improvement: give us peace, give us tranquillity, and with the blessing of God we shall continue to advance.

You will not suppose me to say that government can do nothing: the prosperity of which I speak is in a great measure imputable to the encouragement given, for a series of years, to our domestic industry. When farming absorbed society, a large part of the year was lost, or worse than lost; because tavern haunting, tippling, and gambling were the chief resources of men in the dead and dreary winter months. Manufactures gave profitable occupation during this inclement period. Formerly the markets were remote, and we all know, from the records of universal history, that farmers without the stimulus of ready markets, sink into indolence and indifference. The protection, the encouragement, the stimulating of our manufacturing and mechanical industry, created home markets in every valley, along every stream—thus rousing the taste, energy, and ambition of the farmers within reach of these pervading influences. Ridge-

field is not, strictly speaking, a manufacturing town; but the beneficent operation of the multiplying and diversifying of the occupations of society, has reached this, as it has every other town and village in the State, actually transforming the condition of the people, by increasing their wealth, multiplying their comforts, enlarging their minds, elevating their sentiments: in short, increasing their happiness.

The importance of the fact I state—the progress and improvement of the country towns—is plain, when we consider that here, and not in the great cities—New York, or Boston, or Philadelphia—are the hope, strength, and glory of our nation. Here, in the smaller towns and villages, are indeed the majority of the people, and here there is a weight of sober thought, just judgment, and virtuous feeling, that will serve as rudder and ballast to our country, whatever weather may betide.

As I have so recently traveled through some of the finest and most renowned portions of the European continent, I find myself constantly comparing the towns and villages which I see here with these foreign lands. One thing is clear, that there are in continental Europe no such country towns and villages as those of New England and some other portions of this country. Not only the exterior but the interior is totally different. The villages there resemble the squalid suburbs of a city: the people are like their houses—poor and subservient—narrow in intellect, feeling, and habits of thought. I know twenty towns in France—having from two to ten thousand inhabitants, where, if you except the prefects, mayors, notaries, and a few other persons in each place—there is scarcely a family that rises to the least independence of thought, or even a moderate elevation of character. All the power, all the thought, all the genius, all the expanse of intellect, are centered at Paris. The blood of the country is drawn to this seat and center, leaving the limbs and members cold and pulseless as those of a corpse.

How different is it in this country: the life, vigor, power of these United States are diffused through a thousand veins

and arteries over the whole people, every limb nourished, every member invigorated! New York, Philadelphia, and Boston do not give law to this country; that comes from the people, the majority of whom resemble those I have described at Ridgefield—farmers, mechanics, manufacturers, merchants—independent in their circumstances, and sober, religious, virtuous in their habits of thought and conduct. I make allowance for the sinister influence of vice, which abounds in some places; for the debasing effects of demagogism in our politicians; for the corruption of selfish and degrading interests, cast into the general current of public feeling and opinion. I admit that these sometimes make the nation swerve, for a time, from the path of wisdom, but the wandering is neither wide nor long. The preponderating national mind is just and sound, and if danger comes, it will manifest its power and avert it.

But I must close this long letter, and with it bid adieu to my birthplace. Farewell to Ridgefield! Its soil is indeed stubborn, its climate severe, its creed rigid; yet where is the landscape more smiling, the sky more glorious, the earth more cheering? Where is society more kindly, neighborhood more equal, life more tranquil? Where is the sentiment of humanity higher, life more blest? Where else can you find two thousand country people, with the refinements of the city—their farms unmortgaged, their speech unblemished with oaths, their breath uncontaminated with alcohol, their poorhouse without a single native pauper?

Daniel Webster once said, jocosely, that New Hampshire is a good place to come from: it seems to me, in all sincerity, that Ridgefield is a good place to go to. Should I ever return there to end my days, this may be my epitaph:

> My faults forgotten, and my sins forgiven,—
> Let this, my tranquil birthplace, be my grave:
> As in my youth I deem'd it nearest heaven—
> So here I give to God the breath He gave!

Yours ever, S. G. G.

Here, my dear C . . . ., endeth the first lesson of my life—that portion of it which pertaineth to Ridgefield. Peradventure this has been drawn out in such length as to have taxed your patience beyond endurance. If such be the truth, I beg to offer as palliation, that to me these scenes, incidents, and characters—simple and commonplace though they be—seem not unworthy of being recorded, for the very reason that they are thus common, and therefore are representatives of our New England village people as they were a brief half century ago, and as they are now. If as such, they present a spectacle of little interest—I beg to suggest further, that the picture at least affords a means of measuring the silent but steady advance of society among us: thus refuting the calumnies of the misanthrope, and vindicating the hopes of the sincere lover of mankind. I admit that the scale upon which my observations are made—that of a mere country village—is small, but in proportion to its minuteness, is the certainty of the conclusions we may draw. A survey of a great city or a large space of country, may be deceptive from its extent and the complexity of its details; but in respect to such a community as that I have described, it is impossible to be mistaken. The progress there in wealth, taste, refinement, morals—all that constitutes civilization—is as certain as the advance of time. Nor is this village an exception to the tendency of things in American society: it may differ in the celerity of its

progress, but in its general experience it unquestionably sympathizes with New England at large, and to some extent with the entire United States.

And one thing more: if Ridgefield is thus a representative of the New England village, I may remark that here the comparison ends: at least, there are no such villages in any portion of the Old World: none where the whole people are thus independent in their circumstances; where all are thus educated, so far as to be able to form just opinions upon the great questions of life, in religion, government, and morals; none where the people, conscious of their power, are thus in the habit of forming their own opinions from their own reflections; none where the majority are thus living on their own lands and in their own tenements; none where a general sentiment of equality and good neighborhood thus levels the distinctions of wealth and condition; none where religion and education, left to the free will of the people, thus furnish, in the schoolhouses and the churches, the chief visible and permanent monuments of society.

The view I have taken suggests also another idea, and that is the radical difference between the constitution of things in our country and all others. In all the continent of Europe, the power, genius, intelligence of each country is centralized in the capital It is and has been, from time immemorial, the design of kings and princes of all dynasties, to make the seat of the government the focal point of light—of

learning, taste, fashion, wealth, and influence. The Court is not only the head but the heart of the body politic: the country—the people at large—the limbs and members — are but the subservient tools and instruments of the privileged orders, who rule not only by divine right, but first and foremost for their own benefit.

In our system, this is reversed. Diffusion—an equal distribution of power and privilege to every individual—is the law in government and society, here. It is curious—it is animating and cheering to see the effect of this, in its tendency to raise all up to a respectable standard of intelligence and refinement. Compare the people of the villages of France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Russia, or England even, with those of Ridgefield, or any other of our villages, and see the amazing difference: the first, rude, ignorant, servile; the other, intelligent, modest, manly—accustomed to respect others, but extorting respect in return. Let any one go into the houses of the country mechanics and laborers of Europe, and he will see ignorance, squalidness, and degradation, which admits of no remedy and offers no hope of improvement: let him go into the houses of the same classes in the places to which I refer, and he will find intelligence, comfort, and a constant, cheering, stimulating expectation of advancement in their circumstances. And let it be remembered that of these, and such as these—the toiling

million—the majority of all nations are composed. Say not, then, that I have written these light and hasty sketches in vain!

LETTER XXI.

Farewell to Ridgefield—Farewell to Home—Danbury—My new Vocation—A Revolutionary Patriarch—Life in a Country Store—Homesickness—My Brother-in-law—Lawyer Hatch.

My dear C******

It was in the autumn of the year 1808, as I have intimated, that a sudden change took place in my prospects. My eldest sister had married a gentleman by the name of Cooke, in the adjacent town of Danbury. He was a merchant, and being in want of a clerk, offered me the place. It was considered a desirable situation by my parents, and overlooking my mechanical aptitudes, they accepted it at once, and at the age of fifteen I found myself installed in a country store.

This arrangement gratified my love of change, common to the young and inexperienced. At the same time, Danbury was a much more considerable town than Ridgefield, and going to live there naturally suggested the idea of advancement, especially as I was to exchange my uncertain prospects for a positive profession. However, I little comprehended

what it meant to say farewell to home: I have since learned its significance. In thus bidding adieu to the paternal roof, we part with youth forever—words of mournful import, which every succeeding year, to the very end, impresses on the heart. We part with the spring-tide of life, which strews every path with flowers, fills the air with poetry, and the heart with rejoicing. We part with that genial spirit which endows familiar objects—brooks, lawns, play-grounds, hillsides—with its own sweet illusions: we bid adieu to this and its fairy companionships. Even if, in after life, we return to the scenes of our childhood, they have lost the bloom of youth, and in its place we see the wrinkles of that age which has graven its hard lines upon our hearts.

Farewell to home implies something even yet more serious: we relinquish, and often with exultation, the tender providence of parents, in order to take upon ourselves the dread responsibilities of independence. What seeming infatuation it is, that renders us thus impatient of the guidance of those who gave us being, and who are on earth the brightest reflection of heaven—making us at the same time anxious to spread our untried sails upon an untried sea, and upon a voyage which involves all the chances—evil as well as good—of existence. And yet it is not infatuation—it is instinct. We can not always be young; we can not all remain under the paternal roof. The old birds push the young ones from the nest, and force them to a

trial of their wings. It is the system of nature that impels us to go forth and try our fortunes, and it is a kind Providence, after all, which thus endues us with courage for the outset of our uncertain career.

I was not long in discovering that my new vocation was very different from what I had expected, and very different from my accustomed way of life. My habits had been active, my employments chiefly abroad—in the open air. I was accustomed to be frequently on horseback, and to make excursions to the neighboring towns; I had also enjoyed large personal liberty, which I failed not to use in rambling over the fields and forests. All this was now changed. My duties lay exclusively in the store, and this seemed now my prison. From morning to night I remained here, and as our business was not large, I had many hours upon my hands with nothing to do, but to consider the weariness of my situation. My brother-in-law was always present, and being a man of severe aspect and large ubiquitous eyes, I felt a sort of restraint, which, for a time, was agonizing. I had consequently pretty sharp attacks of homesickness, a disease which—save that it is not dangerous—is one of the most distressing to which suffering humanity is exposed.

This state of sin and misery continued for some weeks, during which time I actually revolved various plans of escape from my confinement—such as stealing away at night, making my way to Norwalk, get-

ting on board a sloop, and going as cabin-boy to the West Indies. I am inclined to think that a small impulse might have set me upon some such mad expedition. By degrees, however, I became habituated to my occupation, and as my situation was eligible in other respects, I found myself, ere long, reconciled to it.

The father and mother of my brother-in-law were aged people living with him, in the same house, and as one family. They were persons of great amiability and excellence of character: the former, Col. Cooke, was eighty years of age, but he had still the perfect exercise of his faculties, and though he had ceased all business, he was cheerful, and took a lively interest in passing events. His career* had been one of

* *Colonel Joseph Platt Cooke*, son of Rev. Samuel Cooke, of Stratfield, now Bridgeport, was one of fourteen children, and born Dec. 24, 1729, (old style): Nov. 22, 1759, he was married to Sarah Benedict: he died Feb. 3, 1816. Their children were Joseph P. Cooke, Thomas Cooke, Elizabeth Cooke, Daniel Benedict Cooke, and Amos Cooke—the latter, my brother-in-law, born Oct. 11, 1773, and deceased Nov. 13, 1810. The Rev. Samuel Cooke, now (1856) of St. Bartholomew's Church, New York, is a son of Daniel B. Cooke, who was Judge of Probate at Danbury for a number of years. To his brother, Joseph P. Cooke, I am indebted for some of the following incidents.

Col. Joseph P. Cooke graduated at Yale College in 1750. He established himself in Danbury, and when the British, under Tryon, having landed at Campo Point, on Long Island Sound, April 25, 1777, marched upon that place, he was colonel of the militia there. Having advice of the advance of the enemy, he sent a messenger to Gen. Silliman, giving the information he had acquired, and asking for troops, ammunition, and instructions. This messenger, coming suddenly upon the invading army, was fired upon, wounded, and taken prisoner.

General Silliman, who was attached to the Connecticut militia, was upon his farm at Fairfield, when he heard of the British expedition. He immediately dispatched messengers to arouse the people, and set

great activity and usefulness. During the Revolution he was a colonel of the Connecticut militia, and upon the death of Gen. Wooster, in the retreat from Danbury, the command devolved upon him, the next in rank. He was greatly esteemed, not only by the community, but by the leading men of the country. He enjoyed the friendship and confidence of Washington, and the acquaintance of Lafayette, Rochambeau, and De Grasse, whom he entertained at his house. He

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out himself for Reading. Here he was joined by the fiery Arnold and the experienced Wooster: altogether they had about seven hundred men—mostly raw militia, fresh from their farms.

So rapid was the march of the British, that the people of Danbury were not informed of their danger, till the enemy were within eight miles of the town. Knowing that the public stores were their object, and well advised of the terrors of a British marauding army, the whole place was a scene of the wildest confusion and alarm. Those who could fly, sought safety in the woods and adjacent villages, taking their women and children with them. The sick and decrepit remained, with a few persons to take care of them.

There were no means of defense in the place: about a hundred and fifty militia, without ammunition, under Colonels Cooke and Huntington, were there, but retired upon the approach of the enemy. Having marched through Weston and Reading, Tryon and his force of two thousand men, reached Danbury in the afternoon of the day subsequent to their landing. Insult to the people and conflagration of the buildings, public and private, followed. The only houses intentionally spared by the enemy were those of the tories; some other dwellings, however, escaped. Nineteen houses, one meeting-house, and twenty stores and barns, with their contents, were destroyed.

The scenes enacted in this tragedy were in the highest degree appalling. Among the articles consumed were three thousand barrels of pork. The fat of these ran in rivers of flame in the gutters, while the soldiers, intoxicated with liquors they had procured, yelled like demons amid the conflagration, or reeled through the streets, or lay down, like swine, in by-places. It adds horror to the scene to know that a portion of the inhabitants of the town opened their arms to the enemy, and saw with rejoicing the ruin and vengeance wrought upon their friends and neighbors.

was a member of Congress under the Confederation, and subsequently filled the various offices of judge of the County Court, judge of Probate, and member of the Governor's council—receiving for many years a larger popular vote than any other individual of that body. His style of living was liberal, and with a large family, settled in the neighborhood, he was like one of the patriarchs of old—dignified, tranquil—loving and beloved. In manner and dress, he was

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Early on the morning of the next day (Sunday, April 27), while the whole country around was lighted with the flames of Danbury, Tryon, hearing that the militia were gathering from all quarters to attack him, began a rapid retreat, taking the route through Ridgebury and Ridgefield.

Gen. Wooster, who had been joined by Col. Cooke and his men, crossing from Reading, overtook the enemy about two miles north of Ridgefield-street. One of his aids was Stephen Rowe Bradley, afterward, for sixteen years, a senator of the United States from Vermont. A smart skirmish ensued, and forty British prisoners were taken. Unfortunately, at this critical moment, Wooster fell, fatally wounded by a bullet-shot in the groin. This caused a temporary panic, during which the enemy pushed on toward Ridgefield. Here, however, at the head of the street, they were met by the impetuous Arnold, who, with only two hundred men behind a stone wall, boldly confronted them. After a time, they were driven back, and the British made their way to their point of embarkment. The untimely fall of Wooster probably only saved them from surrender, or ignominious loss and defeat.

Among the stores burned in Danbury was that of Col. Cooke—with a loss of one thousand pounds. The British soldiers occupied his house, where they had a riotous time. An old negro slave, who was left behind, waited upon them, and contrived to prevent a good deal of damage. When the marauders heard that the Americans were coming, they took some bundles of straw, set the house on fire, and fled. The old negro put out the flames, and thus saved his master's dwelling. For this he had his freedom, and ever after was supported and cherished, with the consideration due to his conduct.

The following original letter—placed at my disposal by Mrs. Stites, granddaughter of Colonel Cooke—not only throws some pleasing light upon his character, but it presents facts of the deepest and most tragic

strongly marked with the Washingtonian era: he was sedate, courteous, methodical in all his ways: he wore breeches, knee-buckles, shoe-buckles, and a cocked hat, to the last. The amenity and serenity of his countenance and conduct, bespoke the refined gentleman and disciplined Christian. His wife was a sister of the Rev. Noah Benedict, of Woodbury, and inherited the traditionary talent of that branch of the Benedict family. Never have I seen a more

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interest. It was written while he was at New York attending to his duties there as a member of Congress.

[*Letter from Colonel Cooke to his son Amos Cooke.*]

NEW YORK, June 3, 1785.

MY DEAR LITTLE SON:

Your letter of the 30th ultimo came safe to hand, but I had not time to return you an answer by the same post, and this may often happen by reason of my quarters being on Long Island. I am very glad to hear that your mamma enjoys a tolerable state of health, and I doubt not but that you will always be very attentive to her comfort. Should she in any good measure recover her strength, I fear she will undertake some business which may be detrimental to her health. Whenever you observe any thing of that kind, I would have you suggest the thought to her, in a very dutiful manner, telling her that you do it at my desire. Platt did very well in taking the method you mentioned for getting Daniel to New Haven. I hope the Society will adopt some plan for going forward with building the meeting-house, for until they do, I wish not to see the Courts held in Danbury. I am not, however, apprehensive that the Assembly will repeal the act.

There are now six members of Congress, who board at Mr. Hunt's. Our accommodations are very good, and we have no rats to annoy us. We have been honored with a visit from the President and most of the members of Congress, who all admire our situation, which commands a prospect of the whole city, of all the shipping in the harbor and on the stocks (of which there are a very considerable number, one of which being a ship of about three hundred tons, we saw launched yesterday), and of every vessel that either goes out or comes in, of which we see forty or fifty under sail at the same time. But amidst all these pleasing scenes there is something that damps our spirits, and

pleasing spectacle than this reverend couple—at the age of fourscore—both smoking their pipes in the evening, with two generations around them, all looking with affectionate veneration upon the patriarchal pair.

My brother-in-law was a man of decided character, and his portrait deserves a place in these annals. He was graduated at Yale College, and had been qualified for the bar, but his health was feeble, and therefore —chiefly for occupation—he succeeded to the store

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casts a gloom over the whole. At about half a mile's distance from our lodgings, lies the wreck of a ship which was the Jersey Prison Ship, from which so many thousands of our poor countrymen, who had the misfortune during the late war to be taken prisoners, were thrown. I wish I could say buried, for then some part of the British inhumanity would have been concealed, but that was not the case. The banks near which this Prison ship lay are high and sandy. The dead bodies of our friends, only wrapped up in old blankets, were laid at the bottom of the bank, and the sand drawn over them. Soon after we came to live upon Long Island, several of us took a walk that way, and were struck with horror at beholding a large number of human bones, some fragments of flesh not quite consumed, with many pieces of old blankets lying upon the shore. In consequence of a representation made to Congress, they were soon after taken up and buried. But walking along the same place not many days ago, we saw a number more which were washed out, and attempting to bury them ourselves, we found the bank full of them. Such conduct has fixed a stain upon the British character which will not soon be wiped off.

The weather has been so very tempestuous this day, that none of us have attempted to cross the ferry, which is the first time we have failed since we have been here.

It gives me pleasure to observe by your last letter that you improve both in writing and composing; and I hope you will give frequent instances of improvement in the same way.

Give my kind love to your mamma and all the family, and tell Platt I intend to write him by the next post. These from your affectionate parent,

JOSEPH P. COOKE.

Master AMOS COOKE.

which his father had kept before him. Being in easy circumstances, he made no great efforts in business. Though, as I have said, he was of stern aspect, and his manners were somewhat cold and distant, he was always a gentleman, and his substantial character that of a just and kind man. In business, he treated people respectfully, but he never solicited custom: he showed, but never recommended his goods. If his advice were asked, he offered it without regard to his own interest. He gave me no instructions, but left me to the influence of his example. He was of a highly religious turn of mind, not merely performing the accustomed duties of a Christian, but making devotional books a large part of his study. Perhaps he was conscious of failing health, and already heard the monitory voice of that disease which was ere long to terminate his career.

Nevertheless, he was not insensible to the pleasures of cultivated society, and however grave he might be in his general air and manner, he was particularly gratified with the visits of a man, in all things his opposite—Moses Hatch, then a leading lawyer in Danbury. Mr. Cooke was tall, emaciated, somewhat bent, with a large head, and large melancholy eyes. His look was gravity itself, his air meditative, his movements measured, slow, and wavering. 'Squire Hatch,* on the contrary, was rather short, full-chested,

* Moses Hatch was born at Kent, Litchfield county, Conn., A. D. 1780, and died at the same place in 1820, on his return from Saratoga, where

perpendicular, and with a short, quick, emphatic step. His eye was small, gray, and twinkling; his lips sharp and close-set, his hair erect and combed back, giving to his face the keen expression of the old-fashioned flint, set in a gun-lock. You expected, of course, on the least movement to see the fire fly; he was, in fact, a man celebrated for his wit no less than his learning, and he seldom opened his mouth without making a report of one or both.

This person was a frequent visitor to the store, and the long winter which commenced soon after I entered upon my apprenticeship, was not a little enlivened by his conversations with my master. It frequently happened during the deep snows, that the day passed without a single customer, and on these occasions, Lawyer Hatch was pretty sure to make us a visit. It was curious to see these two men—antipodes in character—attracted to each other as if by contradiction. My brother-in-law evidently found a pleasant relaxation in the conversation of his neighbor, embellished with elegant wit and varied learning, while the latter derived equal gratification from the serious, solid, manly intellect of his friend. In

he had been for the benefit of his health. He graduated at Yale in 1800, with high honors, delivering a poem on the occasion. As a lawyer, he always thought the cause of his client just, and with that feeling, he generally succeeded in cases before a jury. He seems to have had a sort of somnambulic habit, and when an interesting case was on his mind, or he was preparing for it, he would go through with his argument in his sleep, addressing the court and jury, with much the same method he usually adopted in the actual trial.

general the former was the talker, and the latter the listener; yet sometimes the conversation became discussion, and a keen trial of wit, versus logic, ensued. The lawyer always contended for victory, my brother-in-law for the truth: the one was influenced, no doubt, by the easy practices of his profession; the other by the stern habit of his conscience and character.

The precise form of these conversations has vanished from my mind, but some of the topics remain. I recollect long talks about the embargo, non-intercourse, and other Jeffersonian measures, which were treated with unsparing ridicule and reproach: anecdotes and incidents of Napoleon, who excited mingled admiration and terror, with observations upon public men, as well in Europe as in America. I remember also a very keen discussion upon Berkeley's theory of the idealty of nature, mental and material, which so far excited my curiosity, that finding the "Minute Philosopher," by that author, in the family library, I read it through with great interest and attention. The frequent references to Shakspeare, in these conversations, led me to look into his works, and—incited by the recommendations of my sister—I read them through, somewhat doggedly, seeking even to penetrate the more difficult and obscure passages.

It frequently happened that my master—owing to the influence of disease—was affected with depression of spirits, and the lawyer's best wit and choicest stories were expended without even exciting a smile.

Not discouraged, but rather stimulated by such adversity, he usually went on, and was pretty sure, at last, to strike the vein, as Moses did the water in the rock, and a gush of uncontrollable laughter was the result. I remember in one instance, Mr. Cooke sat for a long time, looking moodily into the fire, while 'Squire Hatch went on telling stories, chiefly about clergymen, of which he had a great assortment. I will endeavor to give you a sketch of the scene.

"I know not why it is so," said the lawyer, "but the fact is undeniable, that the most amusing anecdotes are about clergymen. The reason perhaps is, that incongruity is the source of humorous associations, and this is evidently the most frequent and striking in a profession which sets apart its members as above the mass of mankind, in a certain gravity of character and demeanor, of which the black coat is the emblem. A spot upon this strikes every eye, while a brown coat, being the color of dirt, hides rather than reveals what is upon its surface. Thus it is, as we all know, that what would be insipid as coming from a layman, is very laughable if it happens to a parson. I have heard that on a certain occasion, as the Rev. J.... M.... was about to read a hymn, he saw a little boy sitting behind the chorister in the gallery, who had intensely red hair. The day was cold, and the little rogue was pretending to warm his hands by holding them close to the chorister's head. This so disconcerted the minister, that

it was some minutes before he could go on with the services.

The only effect of this was, that my master drew down one corner of his mouth.

"I have heard of another clergyman," said the lawyer, "who suffered in a similar way. One day, in the very midst of his sermon, he saw Deacon B.... fast asleep, his head leaning back on the rail of the pew, and his mouth wide open. A young fellow in the gallery above, directly over him, took a quid of tobacco from his mouth, and taking a careful aim, let it drop plump into the deacon's mouth. The latter started from his sleep, and went through a terrible paroxysm of fright and choking before he recovered."

Mr. Cooke bit his lip, but was silent. Lawyer Hatch—although he pretended to be all the while looking into the fire—got a quick side glance at the face of his auditor, and continued—

"You know the Rev. Dr. B.... of B., sir? Well, one day he told me that as he was on his way to New Haven, he came to the house of one of his former parishioners, who, some years before, had removed to that place. As he was about to pass it, he remembered that this person had died recently, and he thought it meet and proper to stop and condole with the widow. She met him very cheerfully, and they had some pleasant chat together.

"'Madam,' said he, after a time, 'it is a painful

subject—but you have recently met with a severe loss.'

"She instantly applied her apron to her eyes, and said—

"'Oh yes, doctor; there's no telling how I feel.'

"'It is indeed a great bereavement you have suffered.'

"'Yes, doctor; very great indeed.'

"'I hope you bear it with submission?'

"'I try tu; but oh, doctor, I sometimes feel in my heart — Goosy, goosy gander, where shall I wander!'"

The lawyer glanced at the object of his attack, and seeming to see a small breach in the wall, he thought it time to bring up his heavy guns. He went on:

"There's another story about this same Dr. B.... which is amusing. Some years ago he lost his wife, and after a time he began to look out for another. At last he fixed his mind upon a respectable lady in a neighboring town, and commenced paying her his addresses. This naturally absorbed much of his time and attention, and his parish became dissatisfied. The deacons of the church held several conferences on the subject, and it was finally agreed that Deacon Becket, who had the grace of smooth speech, should give the reverend doctor a hint of what they deemed his fearful backsliding. Accordingly, the next Sabbath morning, on going to church, the deacon overtook the parson, and the following dialogue ensued:

"'Good morning, Dr. B....'

"'Good morning,' Deacon Becket.

"'Well, doctor, I'm glad to meet you; for I wanted to say to you, as how I thought of changing my pew!'

"'Indeed! And why so?'

"'Well, I'll tell you. I sit, as you know, clear over the back-side of the meeting-house; and between me and the pulpit, there's Judy Vickar, Molly Warren, Experience Pettybone, and half-a-dozen old maids, who sit with their mouths wide open, and they catch all the best of your sarmon, and when it gets to me, it's plaguey poor stuff!'"

My brother-in-law could hold out no longer: his face was agitated for a moment with nervous spasms, and then bending forward, he burst into a round, hearty laugh. The lawyer—who made it a point never to smile at his own jokes—still had a look upon his face as much as to say—"Well, sir, I thought I should get my case."

It may be easily imagined that I was greatly interested by these conversations and discussions, and always felt not a little annoyed, if perchance, as sometimes happened, I was called away in the midst of a good story or a keen debate, to supply a customer with a gallon of molasses, or a paper of pins. I know not if this gave me a disgust of my trade, but it is very certain that I conceived for it a great dislike, nearly from the beginning. Never, so far as I can

recollect, did I for one moment enter heartily into its spirit. I was always, while I continued in it, a mere servile laborer, doing my duty, perhaps, yet with a languid and reluctant heart. However, I got through the winter, and when the summer came, Mr. Cooke nearly gave up personal attention to business, in consequence of ill health, and we had a new clerk, H. N. Lockwood, who was older than myself, and took the responsible charge of the establishment. He was an excellent merchant, and to me was a kind and indulgent friend. He afterward settled in Troy, where I am happy to say he is still living, and in the enjoyment of an ample fortune, and an excellent reputation as a father, friend, Christian, and neighbor—the natural fruit of good sense, good temper, and good conduct.

LETTER XXII.

Visit to New Haven—The City—Yale College—My Uncle's House—John Allen—First view of the Ocean—The Court-house—Dr. Dwight—Professor Silliman—Chemistry, Mineralogy, Geology—Anecdote of Colonel Gibbs—Eli Whitney—The Cotton-gin—The Gun-factory.

My dear C******

In the summer of 1809 I took a short tour with my brother-in-law and my sister, for the health of the former. This to me was a grand expedition, for among other places we visited was New Haven, then a sort of Jerusalem in my imagination—a holy place,

containing Yale College, of which Dr. Dwight was president. Besides all this, one of my uncles and some of my cousins lived there, and better still, my brother was there, and then a member of the college. Ah, how my heart beat when we set out! Such was the vividness of my perceptions, that I could fill a book with recollections of that short, simple journey —the whole circuit not exceeding one hundred and twenty miles. But, my dear C...., be not alarmed! I shall not inflict them upon you: a few brief notes will be the entire burden you shall bear, on this occasion.

I pass over the journey to New Haven, and permit you at once to enter the city. I was of course duly impressed with its beauty, for then, as now, it was celebrated for a rare union of rural freshness and city elegance. I have recently, in passing through it, had a transient view of its appearance, and may safely affirm that after pretty large observation in the Old World, as well as in the New, I know of no town or city more inviting; especially to one whose judgment is cultivated by observation and study, and whose feelings are chastened by reflection and experience. There is a taste of the university in the long shady streets, fit for the walks of Plato, and a metropolitan air in the public buildings and squares, suggestive of ideas of the Forum. There is something of the activity and bustle of commerce in a part of the town, and at one point, all the spasm of a railway station. In other portions of the place, and over

three-fourths of its area, there is the quietude and repose proper to a seat of learning. Here the houses seem suited to the city, each with a garden, breathing the perfumes of the country.

At the period of the visit I am describing, New Haven had not one half its present population, and many of the institutions which now adorn it did not exist. The college, however, was then, as now, a leading literary institution in the country. To me it was an object of special reverence, as my grandfather and his five sons had all been graduated there. My brother and two of my cousins were at this time among its inmates. Of course I looked with intense curiosity at the several buildings that belonged to it. The splendid mineralogical cabinet, now the first in the United States, was not there; nay, the science of mineralogy hardly existed at that time. The Trumbull Gallery of Paintings, comprising many of the best productions of that distinguished painter, and enriched by nearly two hundred portraits of celebrated men, has since been added. Nevertheless, many things here excited my admiration. I looked with particular interest—I may add with some degree of envy—at the students, who seemed to me the privileged sons of the earth. Several were pointed out as promising to be the master-spirits of their age and generation; in some cases I have since seen these anticipations fulfilled.

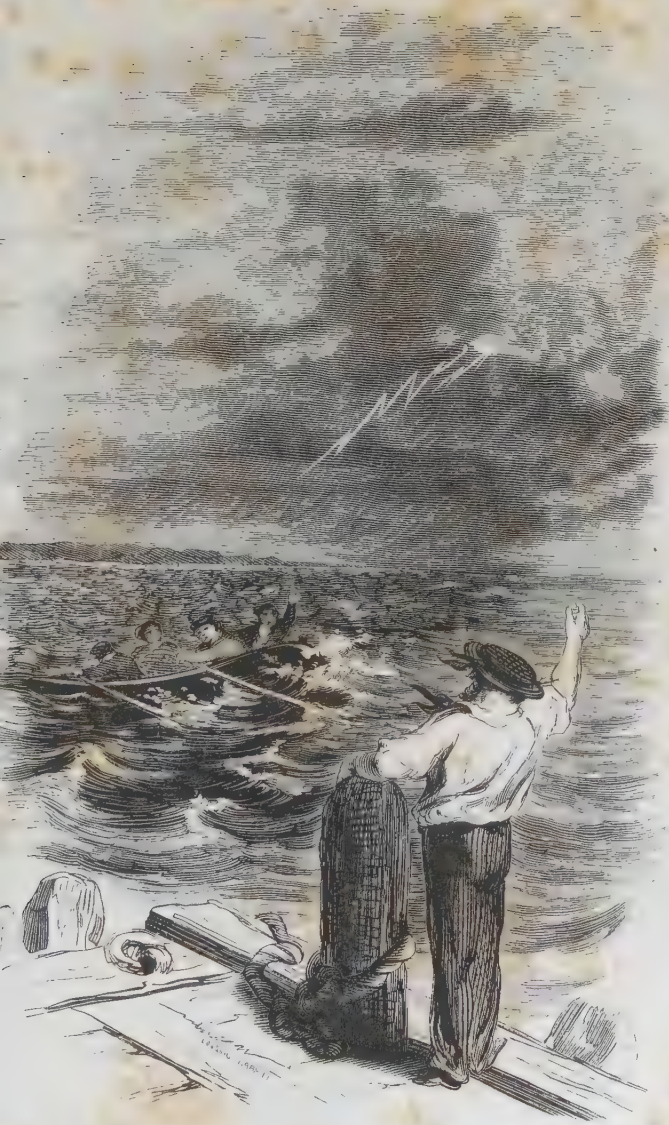
Next to the college I visited the bay, and for the

first time actually stood upon the shore of that living sea, which through my whole childhood had spread its blue bosom before me, in the distant horizon. A party of three or four of us took a boat, and went down toward the entrance of the bay, landing on the eastern side. From this point the view was enchanting—it being a soft summer afternoon, and the sea only breathed upon by light puffs of wind that came from the west. I looked long, and with a species of entrancement, at its heaving and swelling surface: I ran my eye far away, till it met the line where sky and wave are blent together: I followed the lulling surf as it broke, curling and winding, among the mimic bays of the rocky shore. I looked down into the depths of the water, and perceived the finny inhabitants, gliding through the dim recesses, half sheltered in their tranquil domain by groves of sea-weed, or the shadows of the deepening waters. It was a spectacle not only full of beauty in itself, but to me it was a revelation and a fulfillment of the thousand half-formed fancies, which had been struggling in my longing bosom from very childhood.

Our party was so occupied with our contemplations, that we had scarcely noticed a thunder-storm, which now approached and menaced us from the west. We set out to return, but before we had got half across the bay, it broke full upon us. The change in the aspect of the sea was fearful: all its gentleness was gone, and now, black and scowling,

it seemed, as if agitated by a demon, threatening every thing with destruction that came within its scope. By a severe struggle, we succeeded in reaching Long Wharf, though not without risk. The general impression of the whole scene upon my mind, may be gathered from the following lines, though you must not consider me as the literal hero of the story, nor must you regard this description as a veritable account of the day's adventure:

I stood
Upon a rock that wall'd the Deep:
Before me roll'd the boundless flood—
A Glorious Dreamer in its sleep!
'Twas summer morn, and bright as heaven;
And though I wept, I was not sad,
For tears, thou knowest, are often given
When the o'erflowing heart is glad.
Long, long I watch'd the waves, whose whirls
Leap'd up the rocks, their brows to kiss,
And dallied with the sea-weed curls
That stoop'd and wooed the proffer'd bliss.
Long, long I listen'd to the peal
That whisper'd from the pebbly shore,
And like a spirit seem'd to steal
In music to my bosom's core.
And now I look'd afar, and thought
The Sea a glad and glorious thing;
And fancy to my bosom brought
Wild dreams upon her wizard wing—
Her wing that stretch'd o'er spreading waves,
And chased the far-off flashing ray,
Or hovering deep in twilight caves
Caught the lone mermaid at her play.



First Adventure upon the Sea. Vol. 1, p. 342.

And thus the sunny day went by,
  And night came brooding o'er the seas;
A thick cloud swathed the distant sky,
  And hollow murmurs fill'd the breeze.
The white-gull, screaming, left the rock,
  And seaward bent her glancing wing,
While heavy waves, with measured shock,
  Made the dun cliff with echoes ring.
How changed the scene! The glassy deep,
  That slumber'd in its resting-place,
And, seeming in its morning sleep
  To woo me to its soft embrace—
Now waken'd, was a fearful thing—
  A giant with a scowling form,
Who from his bosom seem'd to fling
  The blacken'd billows to the storm!
The wailing winds in terror gush'd
  From the swart sky, and seem'd to lash
The foaming waves, which madly rush'd
  Toward the tall cliff with headlong dash.
Upward the glittering spray was sent,
  Backward the growling surges whirl'd,
And splinter'd rocks by lightnings rent,
  Down thundering midst the waves were hurl'd.
I trembled, yet I would not fly;
  I fear'd, yet loved, the awful scene;
And gazing on the sea and sky,
  Spell-bound I stood the rocks between.

'Twas strange that I—a mountain-boy—
  A lover of green fields and flowers—
One who with laughing rills could toy,
  And hold companionship for hours
With leaves that whisper'd low at night,
  Or fountains bubbling from their springs—

Or summer winds, whose downy flight
Seem'd but the sweep of angel wings:
'Twas strange that I should love the clash
Of ocean in its maddest hour,
And joy to see the billows dash
O'er the rent cliff with fearful power.
'Twas strange—but I was nature's own,
Uncheck'd, untutor'd; in my soul
A harp was set, that gave its tone
To every touch without control.
The zephyr stirr'd, in childhood warm,
Thoughts like itself, as soft and blest;
And the swift fingers of the storm,
Woke its own echo in my breast.
Aye, and the strings that else had lain
Untouch'd, and to myself unknown,
Within my heart, gave back the strain,
That o'er the sea and rock was thrown.

These lines were written many years after the events I have been describing, yet the feelings and fancies they portray were suggested, at least in part, by this my first visit to the sea, and my first adventure upon its capricious bosom. I have since crossed the Atlantic sixteen times, and am therefore familiar with all the aspects of the ocean—but never have they impressed me so deeply and so vividly as upon this occasion.

The next object that attracted my attention was the Court-house. Here, for the first time, I saw a "Court"—its awful judges, holding the issues of life and death, and sitting high and apart upon the

"Bench;" here also were twelve hard-looking men, exercising the high functions of that glorious Saxon institution, called a "Jury." Here also was that terrible man—the "sheriff," and a poor wretch in a pen—the "prisoner at the bar." The trial had already begun, and a lawyer, with a powdered head, was telling the court—the jury and the judges—what a desperate scoundrel he was. He proved him to be a burglar of the very worst description. I felt my heart burn with indignation that such a monster should ever have been at large among society. Pretty soon another lawyer got up, and made it as clear as light, that the man was entirely innocent. My feelings were now totally changed, and I felt as if he were a most deserving and most injured person. The jury at last went out, and after an anxious half hour, returned with a verdict of "guilty." The court then sentenced the culprit to "Simsbury Mines"* for five years.

* The place called *Simsbury Mines*, or *Newgate Prison*, sixteen miles northwest of Hartford, is actually within the limits of the town of Granby, the latter having been set off from Simsbury in 1786. The mines consist of deep excavations made in the rocks, for copper ore, by an English company, about 1760. The speculation ended in disaster, and the caverns began to be used for a prison about the time of the Revolutionary war. In 1790, by a legislative act, it was established as a permanent state-prison under the name of *Newgate*—suitable buildings being erected over the caverns for the purpose. I visited the place about the year 1811 or 1812. The prisoners were heavily ironed with handcuffs and fetters. In some cases several were fastened together by chains attached to a bar of iron. Most of them worked in a smithy, where each man was chained to his forge or bench. Sentinels, with loaded muskets, stood ready to fire in case of revolt.

The object of the prison was not only to shut up felons, and thus to protect society, but to create an idea of horror in the public mind, and

I had been three hours in the court-room, and my interest had been wound up to the highest pitch. When I left it, my head was in a whirl; my feelings also were painfully excited. I had deemed that a Court of Justice was holy ground; that judges were saints, and jurors grave men, deeply impressed with the duty of a religious fulfillment of their high functions. I had imagined lawyers to be profoundly skilled in the art of discerning and developing the

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thus by a moral influence to prevent crime. The abandoned copper mines were the sleeping place of the criminals. The descent to these infernal regions was by a trap-door, leading down a ladder sixty or seventy feet, through one of the shafts. At the bottom was a considerable space, with short galleries leading in various directions. Here were wooden berths, filled with straw. The prisoners descended the perpendicular ladder in their irons, and thus slept at night. They rose at four in the morning, and went to their rest at four in the afternoon. Their food was principally salt pork, salt beef, and beans. The caverns were ventilated by a large shaft, descending into a well, near the center of the excavations. Strange to say, the health of the prisoners was generally excellent.

As if these gloomy regions did not inspire sufficient terror, it appears that the neighborhood, according to popular ideas, was for a long time peopled with beings from the other world. At one period certain persons seemed to be bewitched, hearing singular noises, and seeing spirits in the air. More recently, the crying of a child and other strange sounds were heard in an uninhabited house. Several persons came here to investigate the subject, and upon hearing the noises, suddenly entered the place, but found nothing. Two young men one night slept in the house, and about midnight, heard something rush in at the window, like a gust of wind, upsetting the chairs, shovel and tongs, and then pass down the ash-hole. What could it have been but Old Sooty himself?

It is not astonishing that the very name of *Simsbury Mines* did, in fact, inspire ideas of peculiar horror. When I was a boy, it was regarded as next door to that place which it is not polite to name. Malefactors, it is said, were very shy of practicing their profession in Connecticut, for fear of getting into this dreadful place. However, after a time, a total change of ideas spread over the community, in regard to prisons: it was

truth. I had indulged a fancy that justice and judgment would here reign in every heart, appear in every face, and guide every tongue. How different seemed the reality! The general impression on my mind was a horror of the place, and all the proceedings: it appeared to me that lawyers, judges, jury, sheriff, and all, were a set of the most heartless creatures I had ever seen—pretending to seek justice, and yet without a single sentiment of humanity. Even decency seemed to be outraged, in the treatment of witnesses, and in jibes cast at the poor prisoner, who, however guilty, rather invited sympathy than ridicule. I must confess that I have never got entirely over this my first impression: the atmosphere of a court-room is to me always depressing—though, I am aware, that the manners here have undergone a great and favorable revolution in modern times.

On Sunday I went to the college chapel, and heard Dr. Dwight preach. He was then at the zenith of his fame—a popular poet, an eloquent divine, a learned author, and, crowning all, president of the college.

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discovered that vindictive punishment was alike wrong in principle and effect; that, in fact, it hardened the sinner, while it should always be the object of punishment, in restraining the felon for the benefit of society, to exercise a moral influence for his reformation. This idea must be classed among the larger humanities which have enlightened and ennobled the public spirit of modern times.

Some thirty years ago, in conformity with these views, Simsbury Mines ceased to be a State Prison, and an excellent institution for that object was established in the beautiful town of Wethersfield. Soon after this period, Simsbury Mines were again wrought for copper, and I believe with success.

He was unquestionably, at that time, the most conspicuous man in New England, filling a larger space in the public eye, and exerting a greater influence than any other individual. No man, since his time, has held an equal ascendency, during his day and generation, in New England—except perhaps Daniel Webster. In allusion to his authority in matters ecclesiastical as well as civil—for he was a statesman, and exercised his influence in politics, not obtrusively, but by his counsel—he was familiarly called by political adversaries, *Old Pope Dwight.*

In person he was about six feet in height, and of a full, round, manly form. His head was modeled rather for beauty than craniological display. Indeed, phrenology had not then been discovered, and accordingly great men were born without paying the slightest attention to its doctrines. Dr. Dwight had, in fact, no bumps: I have never seen a smoother, rounder pate than his, which, being slightly bald and close shorn, was easily examined. He had, however, a noble aspect—a full forehead and piercing black eyes, though partly covered up with large spectacles in a tortoise-shell frame—for he had been long afflicted with a morbid sensibility of the organs of sight. On the whole, his presence was singularly commanding, enforced by a manner somewhat authoritative and emphatic. This might have been offensive, had not his character and position prepared all around to tolerate, perhaps to admire it. His voice was one of

the finest I ever have heard from the pulpit—clear, hearty, sympathetic—and entering into the soul like the middle notes of an organ. The subject of his discourse I do not recollect; trained, however, as I had been from childhood, to regard him as second only to St. Paul—I discovered in it full justification of his great fame.*

The house of my uncle, Elizur Goodrich, where

* The life of Timothy Dwight is full of interesting materials for the biographer. His family connections, his precocity, his development, his performances, his heart, his mind, the details of his career—all abound in those striking lights and shades, which rivet the attention.

His father was a merchant of Northampton, his mother daughter of Jonathan Edwards—the most renowned metaphysician America has produced. He was born May 14, 1752. He learned the alphabet of his mother at one lesson: at six he read Latin; at eight was fitted for college; at thirteen he entered Yale; at nineteen he began his great poem of the Conquest of Canaan, and finished it in three years, though it was not published till 1785. He taught rhetoric, mathematics, and oratory in the college for six years. After this he returned to Northampton, and in 1777, married Miss Woolsey, sister of Wm. W. Woolsey, for many years a distinguished merchant in New Haven. The same year he was licensed to preach, and became chaplain in the army, which he joined at West Point. Here he wrote his celebrated song of Columbia. In 1781 he was a member of the State legislature; and in 1783 was settled as minister at Greenfield. His meeting-house was visible to the naked eye from the windows of our house at Ridgefield. In this village he wrote his fine poem of Greenfield Hill, which appeared in 1794. The next year he succeeded Dr. Stiles as President of Yale College, a post which he filled till his death, Jan. 11, 1817, at the age of 64.

Dr. Dwight's works are numerous and valuable: besides poems, essays, &c., he wrote several volumes of Travels, descriptive of scenes and places in New England, which he had visited during college vacations. His greatest work is *Theology Explained and Defended*. This has been extensively published here and in England, and is greatly admired for its argument, its eloquence, and its happy manner as well of statement as of illustration.

The following memoranda, respecting this great man, have been mostly furnished me by his nephew, Mr. Theodore Dwight, now of New York (1856).

we stayed, was then rather the focal point of society in the city—partly because of his official position and genial manners, and partly, also, on account of the character of his wife, who, to say the least, in a happy union of the highest womanly qualities, was inferior to few ladies of her time. Every evening there was here a levee of accidental visitors, consisting of

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The Dwight family in this country is descended from John Dwight, who came from England in 1637, and settled at Dedham, in Massachusetts. The grandfather of Dr. Dwight built Fort Dummur, the first settlement within the bounds of Vermont, about 1723–4. Here the father of Dr. Dwight was born. He was a man of immense strength and stature. During the Revolutionary war he went to New Orleans and up the Mississippi, where he purchased land, intending to remove there with his large family. The tract extended some miles along the bank, and included the site of the present city of Natchez; but he soon after died of a fever. A son who accompanied him was lost at sea, and the evidence of his title to the land was never found.

The news of the death of the father of the family was about a year in reaching them. It was a summer day, and one of the elder sons was making hay in a field, when one of the smallest children, who had been present at its announcement, came tottering through the grass, with the sad story. The youth threw his pitchfork into the air, and exclaimed, "Then we're all ruined!" and such was the force of his emotions, that his mind never recovered from the effects to the day of his death.

Timothy, the eldest son, was absent with the army. He now (1778) went to reside in Northampton, with his mother, and assumed the management of the affairs of the family. He carried on their two farms, and at the same time conducted a school, and preached in the adjacent towns. A number of young ladies and gentlemen from different parts of the country, were among his pupils. He had two ushers—one of whom was Joel Barlow. Gen. Zechariah Huntington and Judge Hosmer were his pupils; and a number of young men went to him from Yale College, after the capture of New Haven. He was at that time very acceptable as a preacher, often filling the pulpit where his grandfather, Jonathan Edwards, had officiated. He not only directed the business of the farms, but often worked in the field with the men, his brother Theodore being at his side. The latter, from whom these facts are derived, mentioned that the hired men used to contest for the privilege of mowing next to Timothy, "*that they might hear him talk*"—fluent, interesting, and in-

the distinguished men of the city, and often including other celebrities. Among the noted individuals I saw there, was John Allen, brother of Mrs. Goodrich—a man of eminent talents and most imposing person, being six feet six inches high, with a corresponding power of expression in his form and face. He had been a member of Congress, and is recorded in its

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structive conversation being at that time, as through life, one of his characteristics.

The family comprised thirteen children, nearly all of whom were now at home. The house was in King-street, and next to it, on the east, was that which had been the residence of Jonathan Edwards during his ministry. There David Brainard had died, nursed in his last sickness by one of the daughters of Mr. E., to whom he was engaged. In the burying-ground was the grave of Brainard, which was then, and long after, annually visited by some of his Indian converts, who used to make long journeys through the wilderness to sit a few hours in silent meditation and mourning, over his ashes.

Timothy Dwight had been trained from his earliest years among the simple but refined society of Northampton, and was familiarized with the history of the French and Indian wars, which had been the sources of so much suffering to the friends and ancestors of those around him. The impressions which he received from such scenes and examples, were permanent on his character and life. He entered the American revolutionary army as a chaplain to General Putnam's regiment, with the ardor of a youthful Christian patriot; preached with energy to the troops in camp, sometimes with a pile of the regiment's drums before him, instead of a desk. One of his sermons, intended to raise the drooping courage of the country, when Burgoyne had come down from Canada with his army, and was carrying all before him—was published, and a copy read to the garrison in Fort Stanwix, on the Mohawk river, when Sir John Johnson had cut off their communications with Albany, and threatened their destruction. The venerable Colonel Platt, many years after, affirmed that it was owing to this sermon, that the garrison resolved to hold out to the last extremity, and made the sally in which they routed and drove off their besiegers, delivering Albany from imminent danger, and contributing materially to the defeat of the British in their campaign of 1777.

Many of the personal traits of Dr. Dwight were interesting. He wrote like copperplate: such was the rapid flow of his ideas that he could employ at the same time two amanuenses, by dictating to them on totally

annals by the title of "Long John." He was in person, as well as mind, a sort of Anakim among the members of the House.*

Here also I saw Dr. Dwight, who was perhaps even more distinguished in conversation than in the pulpit. He was indeed regarded as without a rival in this respect: his knowledge was extensive and various, and his language eloquent, rich, and flowing. His fine voice and noble person gave great effect to what he said. When he spoke, others were silent. This arose in part from the superiority of his powers, but in part also from his manner, which, as I have said, was somewhat authoritative. Thus he engrossed, not rudely, but with the willing assent of those around him, the lead in conversation. Nevertheless, I must remark, that in society the imposing grandeur of

different subjects. He labored daily in the garden, or in some other way, holding it to be the duty of every man to labor, bodily, so as to insure the perfection of life and enjoyment. He advised professional men, in traveling, and on other occasions, to enter into easy and kindly conversation with strangers, as a means of gaining knowledge, and cultivating a kindly feeling in society. He constantly taught the duty of courtesy and politeness; he loved his country and our free institutions, and inculcated the duty of a constant endeavor to elevate and ennoble the public sentiment. He despised all meanness, and especially that demagogism, which, under a pretense of patriotism, is seeking only for self-promotion, and which is even willing to degrade the people, in order to gratify personal ambition. It is impossible to measure the good done by such a man by his personal example, by his influence upon the students under his care for twenty years, and by the impress of his noble character upon the important institution which was the theater of his labors.

* Hon. John Allen was a native of Great Barrington: he settled in Litchfield in 1785, and died in 1812. He was not only a member of Congress, but also of the State Council for several years. His son, John W. Allen, of Cleveland, has been a member of Congress.

his personal appearance in the pulpit, was softened by a general blandness of expression and a sedulous courtesy of manner, which were always conciliating, and sometimes really captivating. His smile was irresistible.

In reflecting upon this good and great man, and reading his works in after-time, I am still impressed with his general superiority—his manly intellect, his vast range of knowledge, and his large heart;—yet, I am persuaded that, on account of his noble person—the perfection of the visible man—he exercised a power in his day and generation, somewhat beyond the natural scope of his mental endowments. Those who read his works only, can not fully realize the impression which he made upon the age in which he lived. His name is still honored: many of his works still live. His Body of Divinity takes the precedence, not only here, but in England, over all works of the same kind and the same doctrine; but at the period to which I refer, he was regarded with a species of idolatry by those around him. Even the pupils of the college under his presidential charge—those who are not usually inclined to hero-worship—almost adored him. To this day, those who had the good fortune to receive their education under his auspices, look back upon it as a great era in their lives.

There was indeed reason for this. With all his greatness in other respects, Dr. Dwight seems to have been more particularly felicitous as the teacher, the

counsellor, the guide, of educated young men. In the lecture-room all his high and noble qualities seemed to find their full scope. He did not here confine himself to merely scientific instruction: he gave lessons in morals and manners, and taught, with a wisdom which experience and common sense only could have furnished, the various ways to insure success in life. He gave lectures upon health—the art of maintaining a vigorous constitution, with the earnest pursuit of professional duties—citing his own example, which consisted in laboring every day in the garden, when the season permitted, and at other times at some mechanical employment. He recommended that in intercourse with mankind, his pupils should always converse with each individual upon that subject in which he was most instructed, observing that he never met a man of whom he could not learn something. He gave counsel, suited to the various professions; to those who were to become clergymen, he imparted the wisdom which he had gathered by a life of long and active experience: he counseled those who were to become lawyers, physicians, merchants—and all with a fullness of knowledge and a felicity of illustration and application, as if he had actually spent a life in each of these vocations. And more than this: he sought to infuse into the bosom of all, that high principle which served to inspire his own soul—that is, to be always a gentleman, taking St. Paul as his model. He considered

not courtesy only, but truth, honor, manliness in all things, as essential to this character. Every kind of meanness he despised. Love of country was the constant theme of his eulogy. Religion was the soul of his system. God was the center of gravity, and man should make the moral law as inflexible as the law of nature. Seeking to elevate all to this sphere, he still made its orbit full of light—the light of love, and honor, and patriotism, and literature, and ambition—all verging toward that fullness of glory, which earth only reflects and heaven only can unfold.

Was not this greatness?—not the greatness of genius, for after all Dr. Dwight was only a man of large common sense and a large heart, inspired by high moral principles. He was, in fact, a Yankee, Christian gentleman—nothing more—nothing less. Where could such character—with such lights and shades—be produced, except here in our stern, yet kindly climate of New England? Can you find such a biography as this in France? in Germany? in Old England, even? You may find men of genius, but hardly of that Puritan type, so well illustrated in the life and character of Timothy Dwight. Shake not your head, then, my dear C...., and say that nothing good can come of this, our cold, northern Nazareth!

Another man, whom I now saw for the first time, was Professor Silliman, then beginning to fill a large space in the public eye. He had recently returned from a visit to Europe, but did not publish his "Jour

nal of Travels" till the next year. It was a great thing then to go to Europe, and get back safe. It was a great thing then to look upon a person who had achieved such an enterprise, and especially a man like the professor, who had held communication with the learned and famous people on the other side of the Atlantic. But this was not all: Professor Silliman had begun to popularize the discoveries of the new science of Chemistry. What wonders were thus disclosed to the astonished people! By means of blow-pipes, flasks, and crucibles, all nature seemed to be transformed as by the spells of a sorcerer. The four old-fashioned elements were changed—proved, in short, to be impostors, having been passed off from time immemorial as solid, substantial, honest elements, while they were in fact, each and all, only a parcel of compounds! *Fire* was no longer fire; it was only an incident of combustion: heat was a sensation, and at the bottom of the whole matter was a thing called caloric. *Earth*, that stable, old-fashioned footstool of man and his Maker, was resolved into at least fifty ingredients; *air* was found to be made up of two gases, called oxygen and nitrogen—one being a sort of good angel, supporting life and combustion, and the other a kind of bad devil, stifling the breath, putting out the candle, and destroying vegetation. As to *water*, that, too, was forced to confess that it had hitherto practiced an imposition upon the world, for instead of being a simple, frank, honest element, it

was composed of oxygen and hydrogen—the latter of such levity as to be fit for little else than inflating balloons!

What a general upsetting of all old-fashioned ideas of creation was this! It is scarcely possible for any one to conceive what a change has taken place, through the influence of chemistry, within the last half century. Every substance in nature has been attacked, and few have preserved their integrity. This science has passed from the laboratory to the workshop, the manufactory, the farm, the garden, the kitchen. Everybody is now familiar with its discoveries, its principles, its uses. Chemistry, which was a black art when I was a boy, is in the school-books now; and Professor Silliman was the great magician that brought about this revolution in our country. He had just commenced his incantations, and already the world began to echo with their wonders. With what engrossing admiration did I look at him, when he came into the room, and I heard his name announced!

At this time, his lectures were not only attended by the youth of the college, but by a few privileged ladies and gentlemen from the world without. I went with one of my cousins, entertaining the common idea that chemistry was much the same as alchemy—an art whose chief laboratory was in the infernal regions. I had read something about the diableries of Friar Bacon, seeking by compact with the Great

Blacksmith below, to discover the philosopher's stone, but hitting by accident upon gunpowder; and this formed my general notion of the science. When I entered the lecture-room, and saw around, a furnace, an anvil, a sink, crucibles, flasks, retorts, receivers, spatulas, a heap of charcoal, a bed of sand, with thermometers, pyrometers, barometers, hydrometers, and an array of other ometers, with a variety of odd-looking instruments — the use of which I could not imagine—I began to feel a strange sort of bewilderment. This was turned to anxiety, when I perceived in the air an odor that I had never experienced before, and which seemed to me to breathe of that pit which is nameless as well as bottomless. I asked one of the pupils who sat near me about it, and he said it was *sulphureted hydrogen*, whereupon I became composed; not that I knew any better what it was, but as they had a name for it, I supposed it was of earth and not of the other place.

At last the lecturer began. I was immediately attracted by his bland manner and beautiful speech. All my horrors passed instantly away, and in a few moments I was deep in the labyrinths of alkalies, acids, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, &c. I learned how sulphur with an *ic* meant one thing, with an *ous*, another, with an *et*, another, and so on. Finally, the professor got beyond my reach, and I was completely lost in a maze of words, too deep for my comprehension. But now the theory was done, and the experi

ments began. The lights were put out. A piece of wire was coiled in a glass jar, filled with oxygen. A light was applied—and fizz—fizz—fizz, went the wire, actually burning like a witch-quill! That was chemistry, brought down to the meanest capacity. We all clapped hands, as they do now at Niblo's. After this, one or two of the pupils took exhilarating gas, and thereupon seemed to enjoy the most delicious trances. Still other experiments followed, and everybody was convinced that the new science was not a thing to be feared, as smelling of necromancy, but that in fact it was an honest science, fit to be introduced even into the domestic arts. Since that time it has actually transformed the whole business of life, producing benefits which no words can adequately describe.

Geology followed close upon the heels of chemistry. This, too, which was confined to the arcana of science in my boyhood, and was even there a novelty, is now a school study. Professor Silliman has been a leader in this also. He had commenced at the period of which I am speaking, but he had only advanced into its precincts—the science of mineralogy. This had begun to be popular in the centers of learning: young collegians went into the mountains with bags and hammers, and came back loaded with queer stones. In fact, hunting specimens took the place of hunting bears, deer, and foxes, and was pursued with all the ardor of the chase. Ladies, turning blue, had pieces

of marble, ore, quartz, and other things of the kind, on their mantel-pieces, and those who were thoroughly dyed, had little cabinets, all arranged on Haüy's principles of crystallography. Let me tell an anecdote in illustration of the spirit of the age.

About this time Colonel Gibbs, originally from Rhode Island, but who now lived on Long Island, near Flushing, became an enthusiast in the new science. He was in fact the founder of the splendid mineralogical cabinet at present belonging to Yale College. While he was in the very crisis of his fever, he chanced to be traveling in a stage-coach among one of the remote rocky districts of New Hampshire. Coming at last to a region which looked promising of mineralogical discoveries, he stopped at a small, obscure tavern, borrowed a hammer, and went into the mountains. Here he soon became engrossed in his researches, which were speedily rewarded by several interesting specimens. In his enthusiasm, his own exertions were not sufficient, so that he employed several persons to assist him in knocking the rocks to pieces. At the end of a week he had completely exhausted his cash. He then paid the workmen in coats, pantaloons, boots, shoes, and at last in shirts. These finally came to an end, and he paid in promises, in no degree abating his zeal. By this time he had collected three sacks of stones, which it took six men to carry. The people around did not comprehend him, and of course supposed him to be insane. One day, while

he chanced to be in the tavern, an acquaintance of his came along in the stage-coach, and the two eagerly exchanged salutations. The keeper of the hotel, seeing this, took the stranger aside, and said:

"You seem to be acquainted with this gentleman?"

"Yes; I know him: it is Colonel Gibbs, of Long Island."

"Well, he said his name was Gibbs, but he is as mad as a March hare."

"Indeed: what makes you think so?"

"Why he has been here a fortnight knocking all Monadnock to pieces. He has spent all his money, and given away his clothes, till he hasn't a shirt to his back. If you are a friend of his, you ought to make his family acquainted with his situation, so that he may be taken care of."

"Oh, I understand. The colonel is not insane: he is a mineralogist."

"A what?"

"A mineralogist—a collector of curious stones."

"Are they to eat?"

"No; they are specimens to be preserved for scientific purposes."

"Ha, ha! what quiddles there are in this world! Every little while, one on 'em comes along here. Last year, a man, called a professor from Cambridge, stopped here a week, ketching all the bugs, beetles, and butterflies he could find. About the same time, another man came, and he went into the mountains.

pulling up all the odd weeds and strange plants he met with. He took away a bundle as big as a haycock; and now this Colonel somebody is making a collection of queer stones! I think the people down your way can't have much to du, else they wouldn't take to such nonsense as this."

I give you this story, not vouching for its precise accuracy, but as characterizing the zeal for modern science, in this its birthday. The truth is, that somewhat more than half a century ago, physical science had almost completely engrossed the leading minds in Europe. Discouraged or disgusted with diving into the depths of metaphysics, the learned world eagerly began to bore into the bowels of the earth: instead of studying mind, they pounded and pondered upon matter. Chemistry, mineralogy, geology, and a whole family of ologies, became the rage. This transatlantic epidemic migrated to America. It was in full vigor among the learned here, at the time I speak of. In the benighted parts of the country, as in the precincts of Monadnock, this mania still appeared to be madness. There was method in it, however. The modern discoveries of chemistry, mineralogy, &c., as already intimated, have wrought a change in human knowledge, astonishing alike for the enlargement of its boundaries, the novelty of its revelations, and the certainty and precision which have taken the place of doubt and conjecture. The hills, the mountains, the valleys, with their founda-

tions—the layers of rocks which have been hidden from the "beginning"—have been examined, and their secrets laid open to the world. Here have been found the traces of kingdoms—vegetable, mineral, and animal—belonging to other creations, such as leaves of perished races of plants, bones of extinct races of animals, rocks built before the flood. These have all become familiar to us, and their inscriptions have disclosed wonders of which mankind had never before dreamed. Thus within the last fifty years, new sciences have been created, and have lavished their wonders upon the astonished world. Champollion discovered the means of interpreting the mystic signs upon the monuments of Egypt; but behold a greater wonder: Cuvier and his followers have enabled us to read the lines written by God upon the rocks which were laid deep in the foundations of the earth, millions of ages ago!

When Dr. Webster came to revise his Dictionary in 1840, after a lapse of twelve years, he found it necessary to add several thousand words, in order to express the ideas which had recently passed from technological science, into our common language. Similar additions were required, a few years after, in the preparation of another revised edition. Nothing can more strikingly mark the progress of knowledge, not merely in the minds of scholars, but among the masses, during the period to which I refer, than this. There is no half century like the last, in the history

of mankind. Nor is the end yet. The thirst for discovery seems only to have begun.

Indeed, such is the celerity of our progress, that some heads grow giddy. They begin to see double: old men have visions, and young maidens dream dreams. Materialism pervades the air, and the new spiritual world is a mere mesmeric phantasmagoria of this earthy ball, which we inhabit. Spirits, now-a-days, push about tables, rap at the door, tumble over the chairs, learn the alphabet, and spell their names with emphasis. Lusty spirits are they, with vigorous muscles, hard knuckles, and rollicking humors! They will talk, too, and as great nonsense as any alive. If these are the only kind of souls to be met with, in their seven heavens, one would hardly like to go there. Really, these mesmeric spirits seem very much of the ardent kind, and I suspect have more alcohol of the imagination than real immortality about them.

Another remarkable person whom I saw at my uncle's house was Eli Whitney, the inventor of the cotton-gin. He was a large man of rather full habit, slightly round-shouldered, and doubling himself forward as he sat. His face was large and slightly oval; his nose long and hooked; his eye deep-set, black, and keen; his look penetrating and prolonged. His hair was black, though sprinkled with gray, for he was now some five and forty years old; his skin was smooth, sallow, and pallid. Altogether, his appearance was striking, the expression of his face having a deep

thoughtfulness about the brow, tempered by a pleasant smile at the corners of the mouth.

In conversation he was slow, but his thoughts were clear and weighty. His knowledge seemed at once exact and diversified: he spoke more of science than literature; he was not discursive, but logically pursued trains of thought, shedding light at every sentence. Few men have lived to more purpose than he. Before his time, cotton was separated from the seed by hand, and hence its price was thirty to fifty cents a pound. He produced a machine, by which a series of hooked, iron teeth, playing through openings in a receiver, performed the labor of five hundred men in a day! An immense facility in the production of cotton has been the result, with a corresponding fall in its price and extension of its use, throughout Christendom.

In 1790,* cotton was hardly known in this country;

* Cotton appears to have been used in India for making cloths as early as 440 B. C., and probably long before that time, yet here the art remained isolated for ages. The Arabians at length brought India cotton to Adula, on the Red Sea, whence it was introduced into Europe. The cotton manufacture was brought there by the Moors of Spain in the ninth century. Raw cotton was first introduced into England from the Levant, chiefly for candlewicks. The cotton manufacture was brought hither by the refugees from the Low Countries in the time of Queen Elizabeth. For a long time, the fabrics produced were coarse; the finer cotton goods—muslins, calicoes, chintzes, being largely supplied from India. In 1730, Mr. Wyatt first began to spin cotton by machinery. In 1742, the first cotton-spinning mill was built at Manchester, the motive-power being mules and horses. The entire value of the cotton manufacture of England in 1760 was a million of dollars: now it is probably two hundred millions of dollars.

In 1790, Mr. Slater put up at Pawtucket, R. I., the first cotton-mill in

in 1800, the whole product of the United States was eighty-five thousand bales; in 1855, it is three millions and a half of bales. Nearly half the nations of the earth, seventy-five years ago, went naked or in rags, or in bark or skins; but they are now clothed in cotton. Then a shirt cost a week's work; now a man earns two shirts in a day. Now, during every twelve hours of daylight, the spindles of the world produce threads of cotton sufficient to belt our globe twenty times round at the equator! And Eli Whitney was the Chief Magician who brought this about.

At the time I speak of, his Gun-factory, two miles north of New Haven, was the great curiosity of the neighborhood. Indeed, people traveled fifty miles to see it. I think it employed about a hundred men. It was symmetrically built in a wild romantic spot, near the foot of East Rock, and had a cheerful, tasteful appearance—like a small tidy village. We visited it of course, and my admiration was excited to the utmost. What a bound did my ideas make in mechanics, from the operations of the penknife, to this miracle of machinery! It was, at the time, wholly

America. In 1802, the first cotton factory was erected in New Hampshire. In 1804, the first power-loom was introduced at Waltham; in 1822, the first cotton factory was built at Lowell. The cotton manufactures of the United States now amount to sixty-five millions of dollars a year!

In 1789, about one million pounds of cotton were produced in the United States; in 1792, Whitney perfected his gin for cleaning cotton; in 1810, the United States produced eighty-five millions pounds of cotton; in 1820, one hundred and sixty millions; in 1830, three hundred and fifty millions; in 1855, probably fourteen hundred millions. The United States are now the chief cotton producers for the world.

engaged in manufacturing muskets for the government. Mr. Whitney was present, and showed us over the place, explaining the various processes. Every part of the weapons was made by machinery, and so systematized that any lock or stock would fit any barrel. All this, which may seem no wonder now, was remarkable at the time, there being no similar establishment in the country. Among other things, we here saw the original model of the Cotton-gin,* upon which Mr. Whitney's patent was founded.

* Eli Whitney was born at Westborough, Mass., in 1765, of parents in the middle ranks of life. He showed an early propensity to mechanics, first making a very good fiddle, and then mending fiddles for the neighborhood. He once got his father's watch, and slily took it to pieces, but contrived to put it together again, so as not to be detected. At the age of thirteen he made a table-knife to match the set, one of which had been broken. During the Revolutionary war he took to nail-making, nails being very scarce, and made a profitable business of it. He then made long pins for ladies' bonnets, walking-canes, &c. At the age of nineteen he began to think of college, and surmounting various obstacles, entered Yale in 1789, having been fitted in part by Dr. Goodrich, of Durham. In college he displayed great vividness of imagination in his compositions, with striking mechanical talent—mending, on a certain occasion, some philosophical apparatus, greatly to the satisfaction and surprise of the Faculty.

In 1792 he went to Georgia, as teacher in the family of Mr. B.... On his arrival, he found that the place was supplied; happily he fell under the kind care and patronage of Mrs. Greene, widow of Gen. G. Hearing the planters lament that there was no way of separating cotton from the seed but by hand, and that it took a slave a whole day to clean a pound, he set privately to work, and after a time produced his gin, which was to make such a revolution in the world. In this process, he was obliged to make his own wire. On disclosing his discovery, the planters saw at once the vast field of enterprise open to them. Whitney took immediate steps to secure a patent, and made arrangements to manufacture gins, but a series of misfortunes and discouragements defeated him. The history of his career at this period is a melancholy story of efforts baffled, hopes disappointed, and engagements violated, disclosing the most shameful wrongs and outrages on the part of individ-

LETTER XXIII.

Durham—History of Connecticut—Distinguished Families of Durham—The Chaunceys, Wadsworths, Lymans, Goodriches, Austins, &c.—Woodbury—How Romance becomes History—Rev. Noah Benedict—Judge Smith.

My dear C******

Having spent about a week at New Haven, we proceeded to Durham, an old-fashioned, sleepy town of a thousand inhabitants. Its history lies chiefly in the remarkable men it has produced—the Chaun-

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uals, and even of courts and legislatures. He instituted sixty suits in Georgia for violations of his rights, and was not able to get a single decision until thirteen years from the commencement! Thus, in fact, the great benefactor of the cotton interest of the South, only derived years of misery and vexation from his invention.

In 1798, through the influence of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, he obtained a contract for the manufacture of arms for the United States, and then established his factory at Whitneyville. He was eight years in producing ten thousand pieces. At length, however, his measures being completed, his establishment was one of the most perfect in the world, and the arms he provided were probably the best then made in any country.

In 1822, he applied for a renewal of his patent for the cotton-gin. It was estimated that the value of one hundred millions of dollars had then been added to the lands of the South by this invention, while he had reaped only sorrow and embarrassment; yet he failed, most of the southern members of Congress opposing his request!

In 1817, he married a daughter of the celebrated Pierpont Edwards, Judge of the District Court for the State of Connecticut. In 1822, he was attacked with disease, which terminated his career in 1825. His character, like his life, was remarkable: though a refined scholar, he was a skillful mechanic—no man in his shop being able to handle tools more dexterously than himself: though possessing a fine imagination, and a keen inventive faculty, he had a perseverance in pursuing his plans to completion, that nothing could arrest. He was at once energetic and systematic; dignified, yet courteous; large in his views, yet

ceys,* celebrated in the literary, clerical, official, and professional annals of New England, and I may add, of the country at large; the Wadsworths, no less noted in various commanding stations, military and civil, public and private; the Lymans, renowned in the battle-field, the college, the pulpit, and the senate; the Austins—father and son—to whose talent and enterprise Texas owes her position as a member of this Union.

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precise in detail; a profound thinker, and scrutinizing nature and its phenomena with amazing depth of thought, yet coming at last with the docility of a child to the Christian's confession—"I am a sinner, may God have mercy upon me!"

* Whoever would understand the true history of Connecticut, should not confine his reading to general works on this subject, but should look into the local histories and genealogical memoranda of towns and villages, of which there are now a great number. A good collection may be found in the Library of the Hartford Atheneum. If any one desires to know the annals of Durham, let him read the sermon delivered by Professor W. C. Fowler at that place, Dec. 29, 1847, and printed at Amherst, Mass., 1848. The notes will prove a revelation, not of history only, but of something like romance. The number of great men proceeding from this small town, in times past, is not only striking but instructive, as it suggests and illustrates the manner in which Connecticut has exerted a powerful influence upon this country—the United States—I might even say upon this continent. Among the families of Durham, noticed by Professor Fowler, are the following:

The Chaunceys.—Nathaniel Chauncey, grandson of President Chauncey, of Harvard College, was born at Hatfield, Mass., 1681, was graduated at Yale in 1702—belonging to the first class that graduated in that college, all of whom became ministers. He was ordained at Durham in 1711, and died there 1756. His son, Elihu Chauncey, lived in Durham, and was a man of high character and large influence. His daughter, Catherine, married Dr. Goodrich, who was my grandfather. His son, Charles Chauncey, settled at New Haven, and was a man of extensive learning and great ability. He became attorney-general of the State and judge of the Superior Court. He received the title of LL.D. from the college at Middlebury; and died 1823. Among his children were Charles Chauncey, LL.D., distinguished as an eminent lawyer and re-

To this list of remarkable names, I trust I may add that of the Goodriches, without the imputation of egotism, for historical justice demands it. At the time I visited the place, nearly all the family had long since left it. My grandfather—Dr. Goodrich—died in 1797, but my grandmother was living, as well as her daughter, Mrs. Smith, wife of Rev. David Smith, the clergyman of the place, who had succeeded to my grandfather's pulpit.

I had never any great fancy for genealogies, so I did not study the broad-spreading tree of the family, its roots running back to the time of Godric the Saxon —the great Adam of the race—as is duly set forth

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fined gentleman, settled at Philadelphia, and died 1849; Elihu Chauncey, a distinguished merchant of Philadelphia, died 1847. Many others, descendants of the Durham Chaunceys, attained distinction.

The Wadsworths.—Among the Durham Wadsworths, were the following: Col. James, from Farmington, born 1675, filled various offices, civil and military, and was much honored and respected in his time. General James Wadsworth, grandson of the preceding, became major-general and member of Congress during the Revolutionary war, died 1817, aged 87. James Wadsworth, nephew of the preceding, born 1768, founded the great Wadsworth estate in western New York, and distinguished himself by his successful labors in behalf of school education: he died 1844. Other members of this branch of the family have reached high and honored celebrity.

The Lymans.—Phineas Lyman, born at Durham, 1716, became major-general; gained the victory at Lake George, in the French and Indian war, for Gen. William Johnson (who received five thousand pounds and a baronetcy therefor), and performed various other military exploits. He projected a settlement in the Southwest, and died in West Florida, 1775. The history of his family is full of tragic interest. Other members of the family were distinguished.

The Goodriches.—See Fowler's notes, above mentioned; also Hollister's History of Connecticut, vol. ii. pp. 634, etc.

The Austins.—For this remarkable family, consult also Fowler's notes.

in King William's Doomsday-Book. Two old bachelors of the place—a little quaint and starch, but studiously polite and very gentleman-like, with a splendid farm, and a house embellished with old oak carvings —told me something about it, and made it out, by a long chain of links, that I was their great, great, double cousin; that is, on my mother's, as well as my father's side. My grandmother also explained to me, that somewhere since the building of Babel, her family was blent with the Griswolds, whence I got my middle name—in token of which she gave me a reverend silver-headed cane, marked I. G., that is, John Griswold, who was her great-grandfather. Of course, I have piously kept this antediluvian relic to the present day.

I trust I have all due respect for this my little, fat, paternal grandmother, and who has already, by the way, been introduced to your notice. She was now quite lame, having broken her leg some years before, and appeared to me shorter than ever; nevertheless, she was active, energetic, and alive to every thing that was passing. She welcomed me heartily, and took the best care of me in the world—lavishing upon me, without stint, all the treasures of her abundant larder. As to her Indian puddings—alas, I shall never see their like again! A comfortable old body she was in all things—and as I have before remarked, took a special interest in the welfare of the generation of descendants rising up around her. When she saw

me eating with a good appetite, her benignant grandmotherly face beamed like a lantern.

She was a model housekeeper, and as such had great administrative talents. Every thing went right in the household, the garden, the home lot, the pasture, and the little farm. The hens laid lots of large fresh eggs, the cows gave abundance of milk, the pigs were fat as butter; the wood-pile was always full. There was never any agony about the house: all was methodical, as if regulated by some law of nature. The tall old clock in the entry, although an octogenarian, was still staunch, and ticked and struck with an emphasis that enforced obedience. When it told seven in the morning, the breakfast came without daring to delay even for a minute. The stroke of twelve brought the sun to the noon-mark, and dinner to the table. The tea came at six. At sunset on Saturday evening, the week's work was done, and according to the Puritan usage, the Sabbath was begun. All suddenly became quiet and holy. Even the knitting-work was laid aside. Meditation was on every brow; the cat in the corner sat with her eyes half shut, as if she too were considering her ways.

On the morning of the Holy Day, all around was silent. The knife and fork were handled quietly, at the table. The toilet, though sedulously performed, was made in secret. People walked as if they had gloves on their shoes. Inanimate nature seemed to know that God rested on that day, and hallowed it.

The birds put on a Sunday air: the cows did not low from hill to hill as on other days. The obstreperous hen deposited her egg, and cackled not. At nine o'clock, the solemn church bell rang, and in the universal stillness, its tones swelled over the village like a voice from above. At ten, the second bell rang, and the congregation gathered in. There, in the place she had held for forty years, was my good grandmother, in rain and shine, in summer and in winter. Though now well stricken in years, and the mother of staunch men—their names honored in the pulpit, the senate, and at the bar—she still faltered not in the strait and narrow path of duty. She was strong-minded, and showed it by a life which elevated, ennobled, and illustrated the character of the mother, the wife, the woman, as she had learned to regard it. It was pleasant to see with what affectionate reverence the people saluted her, as if, in addition to the love they bore her, she still carried with her remembrances of her now almost worshiped husband. Many years she lived after this, but she is now numbered with the dead. Let her portrait have a place in these pages as a fine specimen of the New England wife of the olden time.

As to my uncle and aunt Smith, I may remark that they were plain, pious people, the former worthily filling the pulpit of my grandfather, and enjoying a high degree of respect, alike from his position and character. Besides attending to his parochial duties, he fit-

ted young men for college. Among his pupils were Samuel D. Hubbard, late Postmaster-general of the United States, Dr. Dekay, the naturalist, Commodore Dekay, and other persons who attained distinction. As a man, he was distinguished for his cheerful, frank, friendly manners: as a preacher, he was practical, sincere, and successful. I must mention a story of him, among my pulpit anecdotes. As sometimes happens, in a congregation of farmers during midsummer, it once chanced that a large number of his people fell asleep—and in the very midst of the sermon. Even the deacons in the sacramental seat had gone cosily to the land of Nod. The minister looked around, and just at that moment, the only person who seemed quite awake, was his eldest son, David, sitting in the minister's pew by the side of the pulpit. Pausing a moment and looking down upon his son, he exclaimed, in a powerful voice—

"David, wake up!"

In a moment the whole congregation roused themselves, and long did they remember the rebuke. In after-times, when, through the temptations of the devil and the weakness of the flesh, during sermon-time, their sight became drowsy, and dreams floated softly over their eyelids, then would come to mind the ominous sound, "David, wake up!" and starting from their slumbers, they would shake themselves, and fix their eyes on the preacher, and wrestle with their infirmities like Jacob—sometimes, though not always,

prevailing like Israel. I need only add in respect to this excellent old gentleman, that he is still living, at the age of eighty-nine, and last year (1855) preached at the capitol in Washington to an attentive and gratified audience.

During our stay of two or three weeks at Durham, my brother-in-law was so ill as to need the advice of a skillful physician. Accordingly I was dispatched on horseback to Middletown, a distance of eight or ten miles, for Dr. O . . . ., then famous in all the country round about. On my way I met a man of weather-beaten complexion and threadbare garments, mounted on a lean and jaded mare. Beneath him was a pair of plump saddlebags. He had all the marks of a doctor, for then men of this profession traversed the country on horseback, carrying with them a collection of pills, powders, and elixirs, equivalent to an apothecary's shop. A plain instinct told me that he was my man. As I was about to pass him, I drew in my breath, to ask if he were Dr. O . . . ., but a sudden bashfulness seized me: the propitious moment passed, and I went on.

On arriving at the house of Dr. O . . . ., I learned that he had gone to a village in the southwestern part of the town, six or eight miles off. "There!" said I to myself, "I knew it was he: if I had only spoken to him!" However, reflection was vain. I followed to the designated spot, and there I found that he had left about half an hour before, for another

village in the central part of the town. I gave chase, but he was too quick for me, so that I was obliged to return to Durham without him. "Ah!" I thought, "how much trouble a little courage would have saved me!" In fact, I took the incident to heart, and have often practiced to advantage upon the lesson it suggested, which is, never to let a doctor, or any thing else, slip, for the want of asking an opportune question.

This Dr. O .... made several visits to Durham, and I remember to have heard my brother-in-law once ask him whether he was a Brunonian* or a Cullenite; to which he replied, smartly—"Sir, I am a doctor

* About this time, the "spotted fever" appeared along the Connecticut river, and a change in the general character of fevers took place, there being now a tendency to typhoid, instead of inflammatory, symptoms, as had been the case before. These circumstances embarrassed and baffled the profession. In general, however, they followed their proclivities, and either physicked or stimulated, as their doctrines dictated. In point of fact, one practice killed and cured about as well as the other. At all events, the plague raged for some years at certain places and at particular seasons, and thus society was wrought into a state of frenzy upon the two modes of treatment. At a somewhat later date—about 1812—a family that held to brandy, would hardly hold intercourse with another which held to jalap. At Hartford, Doctors Todd and Wellss, who stimulated, were looked upon as little better than infidels by those who believed in Dr. Bacon and purgatives. These divisions even caught the hues of political parties, and alcohol became democratic, while depletion was held to be federal. In the end it proved that both systems were right and both wrong—to a certain extent. Experience showed that the true mode of practice was to treat each case according to its symptoms. The fitness of a physician for his profession, was, under these circumstances, manifested by the sagacity with which he found his way out of the woods. Dr. O .... was one of those who, at an early stage of the difficulty, *being a doctor himself*, that is, being guided by good sense, and not by slavery, to a system—arrived at the true mode of practice.

myself!" The pith of this answer will be felt, when it is known that at this period, and indeed for some years after, there was a schism in the medical profession of this region, which became divided into two parties; one of them adopting the theory and practice of John Brown,* that life is a forced state, depending upon stimuli, and hence that disease and death are to be constantly combated by stimulants. According to this theory, even certain fevers were to be treated with brandy, and in extreme cases, with a tincture of Spanish flies — internally administered! The other followed the theory of Cullen, who adopted the opposite practice of purgatives and depletion, more especially in fevers. A real frenzy ensued, and

* John Brown was born at Dunse, Scotland, 1735. He studied medicine with Cullen, then the leading man of the profession in Great Britain. After a time he produced his *Elements of Medicine*, in Latin, designed to overthrow the system which Cullen had produced. Its general doctrine, as stated above, was that life is a forced state, only sustained by the action of external agents operating upon the body, every part of which is furnished with a certain amount of excitability. He discarded all drugs, and confined himself to alcohol—wine, brandy, &c.—for one set of diseases, and opium for the opposite set. The simplicity of the doctrine and the ability with which it was set forth, gave it for a time a fatal currency, not only in Europe but in America. The celebrated Dr. Beddoes, among others, adopted and propagated it. The system, however, after a time, fell into disrepute. Brown died in 1788, a victim of intemperance, probably the result of his medical system.

William Cullen was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, 1712, and having studied medicine, he practiced with credit at Glasgow. In 1756, he became Professor of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh, where he greatly distinguished himself. In 1763, he succeeded Dr. Alston as Professor of Medicine. As a teacher, his popularity was unbounded. His personal character was distinguished for amiableness and purity: his medical works for a time exercised a powerful influence, and he is still regarded as having greatly advanced the science of medicine, though some of his theories have been modified and others rejected.

the medical profession, as well as society, were involved in a sort of temporary insanity.

At length we departed from Durham, and took our way homeward, through a series of small towns, arriving at last at Woodbury. Here we remained a week or ten days, being hospitably entertained by the Rev. Noah Benedict, my brother-in-law's uncle. He lived in a large, low, old-fashioned house, embowered in elms, and having about it an air of antiquity, comfort, and repose. He was himself very aged, nearly eighty years old, I should judge. He was, like my own lineage, of the orthodox faith, and sometimes officiated in his pulpit, though he had now a colleague. I need not describe him, further than to say that he was a fine old man, greatly beloved by his parish, and almost adored by his immediate connections. Close by, in a sumptuous house, lived his son, Noah B. Benedict, then a leading lawyer of the State. Half a mile to the south, in an antique, gable-roofed mansion, dwelt his daughter, the wife of Nathaniel Smith, one of the judges of the Supreme Court, and regarded as the intellectual giant of his time. I have good reason to remember the place, for it is now the home of one of my sisters, who married, many years later, the only child of its founder—long since gathered to his fathers.

The week of our sojourn at Woodbury flew on golden wings with me. The village itself was after my own heart. It lies in a small tranquil valley, its

western boundary consisting of a succession of gentle acclivities, covered with forests; that on the east is formed of basaltic ledges, broken into wild and picturesque forms, rising sharp and hard against the horizon. Through the valley, in long serpentine sweeps, flows a stream, clear and bright—now dashing and now sauntering; here presenting a rapid and there a glassy pool. In ancient times it was bordered by cities of the beaver; it was now the haunt of a few isolated and persecuted muskrats. In the spring and autumn, the wild-ducks, in their migrations, often stooped to its bosom for a night's lodging. At all seasons it was renowned for its trout. In former ages, when the rivers, protected by the deep forests, ran full to the brim, and when the larger streams were filled to repletion with shad and salmon, this was sometimes visited by enterprising individuals of their race, which shot up cataracts, and leaped over obstructing rocks, roots, and mounds, impelled by an imperious instinct to seek places remote from the sea, where they might deposit in safety the seeds of their future progeny. In those days, I imagine, the accidents and incidents of shad and salmon life, often rivaled the adventurous annals of Marco Polo or Robinson Crusoe.

There was, in good sooth, about this little village, a singular union of refinement and rusticity, of cultivated plain and steepling rock, of blooming meadow and dusky forest. The long, wide street, saving the

highway and a few stray paths, here and there, was a bright, grassy lawn, decorated with abundance of sugar-maples, which appeared to have found their Paradise.* Such is the shape of the encircling hills and ledges that the site of the village seems a sort of secluded Happy Valley, where every thing turns to poetry and romance. And this aptitude is abundantly encouraged by history—for here was once the favored home of a tribe of Indians. All around—the rivers, the hills, the forests—are still rife with legends and remembrances of the olden time. A rocky mound, rising above the river on one side, and dark forests on the other, bears the name of "Pomperaug's Castle;" a little to the north, near a bridle-path that traversed the meadows, was a heap of stones, called "Pomperaug's Grave." To the east I found a wild ledge, called Bethel Rock.† And each of these objects has

* The street of Woodbury continues to that of Southbury, the two united being three miles in length. These are decorated by a double line of sugar-maples—certainly one of the most beautiful exhibitions of the kind I have ever seen.

† Woodbury is alike historical and legendary ground. Its names trace out its story. Quassapaug Lake, Shepaug River, Quanopaug Falls, Nonnewaug Falls, tell us of its original proprietors: Rattlesnake Rock, and White Deer Hills, bespeak the ancient inhabitants of the forest: Bethel Rock, Carmel Hill, and Tophet Hollow, announce the arrival here of the Pilgrim settlers from New Haven: Hall's Rock, Good Hill, Lighting's Playground, Scuppo, Hazel Plain, Moose Horn Hill, Ash Swamp, all in Woodbury or the vicinity, indicate alike certain traits of scenery, with the final settlement of the country by the English. The remarkable men that have originated in this town within the last century, present a marvellous record of ability, patriotism, and piety. My imagination was greatly excited by the legends I heard when I first visited Woodbury, and some years after (1828) I wrote and published in the

its story. How suggestive—how full of imaginings was Woodbury to me, when I visited it, five and forty years ago! And the woods, teeming with the smaller game—the gray-squirrel, the partridge, and quail, my old West Mountain acquaintances—with what delight did I traverse them, gun in hand, accompanied by a

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Legendary at Boston, the following story, which has now become almost historical:

THE LEGEND OF BETHEL ROCK.

"In the picturesque state of Connecticut, there is not a spot more beautiful than the village of Pomperaug. It is situated not very far from the western border of the state, and derives its name from a tribe of Indians, who once inhabited it. It presents a small, but level valley, surrounded by hills, with a bright stream rippling through its meadows. The tops of the high grounds which skirt the valley, are covered with forests, but the slopes are smooth with cultivation, nearly to their summits. In the time of verdure, the plain displays a vividness of green like that of velvet, while the forests are dark with the rich hues supposed to be peculiar to the climate of England.

"The village of Pomperaug consists now of about two hundred houses, with three white churches, arranged on a street which passes along the eastern margin of the valley. At the distance of about twenty rods from this street, and running parallel to it for nearly a mile, is a rock, or ledge of rocks, of considerable elevation. From this, a distinct survey of the place may be had, almost at a glance. Beginning at the village, the spectator may count every house, and measure every garden; he may compare the three churches, which now seem drawn close together; he may trace the winding path of the river by the trees which bend over its waters; he may enumerate the white farm-houses which dot the surface of the valley; he may repose his eye on the checkered carpet which lies unrolled before him, or it may climb to the horizon over the dark blue hills which form the border of this enchanting picture.

"The spot which we have thus described did not long lie concealed from the prying sagacity of the first settlers of the colony of New Haven. Though occupied by a tribe of savages, as before intimated, it was very early surveyed by more than one of the emigrants. In the general rising of the Indians in Philip's war, this tribe took part with the Pequods, and a large portion of them shared in their destruction. The chief himself was killed. His son, still a boy, with a remnant of his father's people, who had been driven into exile, returned to their

black-eyed stripling, now my respected and gray-haired brother-in-law!

It was a great time, that happy week, for be it remembered that for a whole year I had been imprisoned in a country store. What melody was there in the forest echoes, then! Ah! I have since heard

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native valley, and lived for a time on terms of apparent submission to the English.

"The period had now arrived when the young chief had reached the age of manhood. He took, as was the custom with his fathers, the name of his tribe, and was accordingly called Pomperaug. He was tall, finely formed, with an eye that gleamed like the flashes of a diamond. He was such a one as the savage would look upon with idolatry. His foot was swift as that of the deer; his arrow was sure as the pursuit of the eagle; his sagacity penetrating as the light of the sun.

"Such was Pomperaug. But his nation was passing away; scarce fifty of his own tribe now dwelt in the valley in which his fathers had hunted for ages. The day of their dominion had gone. There was a spell over the Dark Warrior. The Great Spirit had sealed his doom. So thought the remaining Indians in the valley of Pomperaug, and they sullenly submitted to a fate which they could not avert.

"It was therefore without resistance, and, indeed, with expressions of amity, that they received a small company of English settlers into the valley. This company consisted of about thirty persons, from the New Haven colony, under the spiritual charge of the Rev. Noah Benison. He was a man of great age, but still of uncommon mental and bodily vigor. His years had passed the bourne of threescore and ten, and his hair was white as snow. But his tall and broad form was yet erect, and his cane of smooth hickory, with a golden head, was evidently a thing 'more of ornament than use.'

"Mr. Benison had brought with him the last remnant of his family. She was the daughter of his only son, who, with his wife, had slept many years in the tomb. Her name was Mary, and well might she be the object of all the earthly affections which still beat in the bosom of one whom death had made acquainted with sorrow, and who but for her had been left alone.

"Mary Benison was now seventeen years of age. She had received her education in England, and had been but a few months in America. She was tall and slender, with a dark eye, full of soul and sincerity. Her hair was of a glossy black, parted upon a forehead of ample and expressive beauty. When at rest, her appearance was not striking:

Catalani and Garcia and Pasta and Sontag and Grisi. I have even heard the Swedish nightingale; nay, in France and Italy—the very home of music and song --I have listened to the true nightingale, which has given to Jenny Lind her sweetest and most appropriate epithet; but never, in one or all, have I heard

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but if she spoke or moved, she fixed the attention of every beholder by the dignity of her air, blent with a tone of tender, yet serious sentiment.

"The settlers had been in the valley but a few months, when some matter of business relative to a purchase of land, brought Pomperaug to the hut of Mr. Benison. It was a bright morning in autumn, and while he was talking with the old gentleman at the door, Mary, who had been gathering flowers in the woods, passed by them and entered the place. The eye of the young Indian followed her with a gaze of entrancement. His face gleamed as if he had seen a vision of more than earthly beauty. But this emotion was visible only for a moment. With the habitual self-command of a savage, he turned again to Mr. Benison, and calmly pursued the subject which occasioned their meeting.

"Pomperaug went away, but he carried the image of Mary with him. He retired to his wigwam, but it did not please him. He ascended to the top of the rock, at the foot of which his wigwam was situated, and which now goes under the name of Pomperaug's Castle, and looked down upon the river, which was flashing in the slant rays of the morning. He turned away, and sent his long gaze over the checkered leaves of the wood, which, like a sea, spread over the valley. He was still dissatisfied. With a single leap he sprang from the rock, and, alighting on his feet, snatched his bow and took the path which led into the forest. In a few moments he came back, and, seating himself on the rock, brooded for some hours in silence.

"The next morning Pomperaug repaired to the house of Mr. Benison to finish the business of the preceding day. He had before signified an inclination to accede to the terms proposed by Mr. Benison, but he now started unexpected difficulties. On being asked the reason, he answered as follows:

"'Listen, father—hear a Red Man speak! Look into the air, and you see the eagle. The sky is his home, and doth the eagle love his home? Will he barter it for the sea? Look into the river, and ask the fish that is there, if he will sell it? Go to the dark-skinned hunter, and demand of him if he will part with his forests? Yet, father, I will part with my forests, if you will give me the singing bird that is in thy nest.'

such music as filled my ears, that incense-breathing morn, when I made a foray into the wilds of Woodbury! There was indeed no nightingale there: the season of wood minstrelsy was passed; even the thrush had descended from its perch aloft, and ceasing its melodies, was busy in the cares of its young

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"'Savage,' said the pilgrim, with a mingled look of disgust and indignation, 'will the lamb lie down in the den of the wolf? Never! Dream not of it—I would sooner see her die! Name it not.' As he spoke he struck his cane forcibly on the ground, and his broad figure seemed to expand and grow taller, while his eye gleamed, and the muscles of his brow contracted with a lowering and angry expression. The change of the old man's appearance was sudden and striking. The air and manner of the Indian, too, was changed. There was now a kindled fire in his eye, a proud dignity in his manner, which a moment before was not there; but these had stolen upon him, with that imperceptible progress by which the dull colors of the serpent, when he becomes enraged, are succeeded by the glowing hues of the rainbow.

"The two now parted, and Pomperaug would not again enter into any negotiations for a sale of his lands. He kept himself, indeed, aloof from the English, and cultivated rather a hostile spirit in his people toward them.

"As might have been expected, difficulties soon grew up between the two parties, and violent feelings were shortly excited on both sides. This broke out into open quarrels, and one of the white men was shot by a savage lurking in the woods. This determined the settlers to seek instant revenge, and accordingly they followed the Indians into the broken and rocky districts which lie east of the valley, whither, expecting pursuit, they had retreated.

"It was about an hour before sunset, when the English, consisting of twenty well-armed men, led by their reverend pastor, were marching through a deep ravine, about two miles east of the town. The rocks on either side were lofty, and so narrow was the dell, that the shadows of night had already gathered over it. The pursuers had sought their enemy the whole day in vain; and having lost all trace of them, they were now returning to their homes. Suddenly a wild yell burst from the rocks at their feet, and twenty savages sprang up before them. An arrow pierced the breast of the pilgrim leader, and he fell. Two Indians were shot, and the remainder fled. Several of the English were wounded, but none mortally, save the aged pastor.

"With mournful silence they bore back the body of their father. He

ones, now beginning life in the bush. It was the echo of my own heart, that gave to simple and familiar sounds—that of the far-off barking dog, the low of distant herds, the swing of the village bell, the murmur of the brooks, the rustle of the leaves in the joyous breath of morning—their real melody. And

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was buried in a sequestered nook of the forest, and with a desolate and breaking heart the orphan Mary turned away from his grave, to be for the first time alone in their humble house in the wilderness.

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"A year passed. The savages had disappeared, and the rock on which the pilgrim met his death had been consecrated by many prayers. His blood was still visible on the spot, and his people often came with reverence to kneel there and offer up their petitions. The place they called *Bethel Rock*, and piously they deemed that their hearts were visited here with the richest gifts of heavenly grace.

"It was a sweet evening in summer, when Mary Benison, for the last time, went to spend an hour at this holy spot. Long had she knelt, and most fervently had she prayed. Oh! who can tell the bliss of that heavenly communion to which a pure heart is admitted in the hours of solitude and silence! The sun went down, and as the vail of evening fell, the full moon climbed over the eastern ledge, pouring its silver light into the valley, and Mary was still kneeling, still communing with Him who seeth in secret.

"At length a slight noise, like the crushing of a leaf, woke her from her trance, and with quickness and agitation she set out on her return. Alarmed at her distance from home at such an hour, she proceeded with great rapidity. She was obliged to climb up the face of the rocks with care, as the darkness rendered it a critical and dangerous task. At length she reached the top. Standing upon the verge of the cliff, she then turned a moment to look back upon the valley. The moon was shining full upon the vale, and she gazed with a mixture of awe and delight upon the sea of silvery leaves which slept in deathlike repose beneath her. She then turned to pursue her path homeward, but what was her amazement to see before her, in the full moonlight, the tall form of Pomperaug! She shrieked, and, swift as his own arrow, she sprang over the dizzy cliff. The Indian listened—there was a moment of silence—then a heavy sound—and the dell was still as the tomb.

"The fate of Mary was known only to Pomperaug. He buried her with a lover's care amid the rocks of the glen. Then, bidding adieu to

then the merry mockery of the red-squirrel, flying, rather than leaping from tree to tree, with the hearty guffaw of his gray brother, rioting in the abundance of some aged hickory: how did these add to the general harmony! And more than all this, there was occasionally the low whistle of the quail, stealing through the leaves, attended at intervals by the

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his native valley, he joined his people, who had retired to the banks of the Housatonic.

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"More than half a century subsequent to this event, a rumor ran through the village of Pomperaug, that some Indians were seen at night, bearing a heavy burden along the margin of the river, which swept the base of Pomperaug's Castle. In the morning a spot was found near by, on a gentle hill, where the fresh earth showed that the ground had been recently broken. A low heap of stones on the place revealed the secret. They remain there to this day, and the little mound is shown by the villagers as Pomperaug's grave."

Such is the legend as I wrote it. The reader will find in Cothren's History of Ancient Woodbury, the exact version of the story, as authentic chroniclers have now established it. The true name of the place is Woodbury, instead of Pomperaug: the Indian hero must be called Waramaukeag, not Pomperaug: the aged minister is to be called Walker, in lieu of Benison; and the heroine, his niece, must bear the same name, with the baptismal title of Sarah. With these emendations, popular faith has sanctioned the general outlines of my invention. Thus, it seems, a romance requires about thirty years to crystallize into veritable history!

The name of Bethel Rock is, however, strictly historical; here the ancient settlers actually assembled for worship; and in commemoration of this fact, a few years since, Dr. Beecher, then settled at Litchfield, with several other clergymen of the vicinity, came hither and united in prayer. The records of Woodbury, as given us by the historian already alluded to, show its chronicles to be almost as full of incident, legend, and adventure, as the Highlands of Scotland. All that is wanted to render them as deeply interesting, is the inspiration of the poet to sing and set them to music. Mr. Cothren has made a good beginning, for his history breathes of romance without impeaching its truthfulness, as is evinced by the titles of some of his topics, like the following: Legend

rolling drum of the partridge,* reminding me, with all the force of old associations, that I was once more at liberty in the forest. How great, how impressive do little and even common things become, when seen through the prismatic lens of youthful remembrance!

During our stay in Woodbury, as I have said, we lodged at the house of the aged clergyman, Father Benedict,† as he was generally called. I remember

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of Squaw Rock: the Belt of Wampum: Mr. Boardman's Praying Match: Watchbrok's Disclosure, &c., &c.

* All American woodsmen will know that I here speak of the ruffed grouse, which in the autumn makes the forest echo by rapidly beating some old decayed trunk of a fallen tree with its wings. To a sportsman, it is a sound of lively interest—for it seems to be a sort of challenge to the sport.

† Rev. Noah Benedict was a native of Danbury, and graduated at Nassau Hall in 1757. He received the degree of Master of Arts, *ad eundem*, from Yale College, in 1760, and was a fellow of that institution from 1801 to 1812. He was a man of sound piety, and of great dignity and amiability of temper. He held an honored place in the affections of his people. He was successful as a spiritual teacher, and was followed to the tomb by his parishioners with hearts throbbing with grief. His church has been noted for the length of time it has enjoyed the services of its ministers. There is perhaps no other instance in the country where a church has been presided over by three pastors, as has been the case with this, for the long period of one hundred and forty-three years.

Mr. Benedict was spoken of, during his life, and is still so remembered, as one of the fairest specimens of the good clergymen of Connecticut. Constitutionally, he had a well-balanced mind; singularly discreet and exemplary in his every-day deportment and in all the relations of life; as a preacher and counselor, he held a high rank. His temper was even, and his condition was placid and easy. Temptations, he was cautious, and even zealous to put, if possible, out of his way. He once had a favorite horse—young, sound, gentle, active, and graceful; the animal was admired by his rider's parishioners. But Mr. Benedict, to the surprise of all, sold the horse. A neighbor expressed his astonishment at the event, and inquired the reason of it. "He was growing unruly," was the grave pastor's reply. "But I thought," said the man, "that he was a very orderly horse." "No," was the rejoinder; "he was growing

his voice still, which was remarkable for its tender, affectionate tones. There was also a childlike simplicity in his prayers, which was very touching. These made such an impression on me that I could now repeat several passages, which were perhaps favorites, as they came in every petition.

Of Judge Smith, his son-in-law—whom I have already mentioned—I have also the most vivid recollections. He was then about fifty years of age. His hair was jet black, his eye black and piercing, his complexion swarthy. He was of middle height, of a large and massive mould. There was a mingled plainness and majesty about his appearance, such as might have suited Cincinnatus. He was a great farmer, and devoted himself with intense interest to his tillage, his cattle, and his flocks, during the recesses of the courts. At these times, he seemed to delight in the rustic sports and simple pastimes to which he had been accustomed in early life. After the day's task was done, he was often seen in the midst of his workmen, gathered upon some grassy plain, for the race, the wrestle, or other gymnastic

quite unruly: he once got into the pulpit, and I thought it was time to part with him."

This minister was blessed in his family, and honored in the alliances of his children by marriage, and by their eminent usefulness and the distinctions to which they attained in public offices and employments. His people never desired his separation: death effected it in the year 1813, at the age of seventy-six. He lives in the sweet and grateful remembrance of the aged in his parish and out of it; and the present generation of Woodbury have heard from the reverential and affectionate, the story of his goodness.—*Cothren's History of Ancient Woodbury.*

exercises—he being the umpire, and joining heartily in the spirit of frolic and fun, proper to the occasion. Nothing could be more admirable than his intercourse with his family and the people around him. All knew him to be the judge, yet all felt that he was even more to them—the father, friend, and neighbor.

Few men have left behind them a biography at once so striking and so spotless. "Perhaps," says the chronicler, "the history and character of no other man could be more profitably studied by the youth of ardent aspirations, feeling the fire of genius burning within him, and struggling under the power of adverse circumstances for an honorable position in society, than that of Mr. Smith. He furnishes a brilliant example of what the innate force of a mighty intellect can accomplish, though surrounded by difficulties and obstacles."*

The father of Mr. Smith was poor, and hence he had an extremely limited education. While yet young, he and his brother were engaged in trading between Philadelphia and the northern parts of New England. Being once at Rutland, Vermont, and having a little leisure, he went into the court-house, and heard a trial there. He became deeply interested, and after a little reflection, he said to his brother—"I have been to Philadelphia, to sell new rum, for the last time: I am determined to be a lawyer. Ignorant as I am, I

* Cothren's History of Ancient Woodbury, p. 398.

could have managed the case I heard in court, better than either of the parties engaged. My mind is made up!" Soon after this, he offered himself as a student in the office of Judge Reeve of Litchfield. The latter, knowing his unlettered condition, attempted to dissuade him from an attempt which seemed so hopeless. As Smith persisted, however, he lent him a book, desiring him to read it, and come back in a week for an examination. This he did, and the judge was so struck with his intelligence and capacity, that he received him into his office, and thenceforward gave him every encouragement. Such was his progress, that he was admitted to the bar, even before the time usually required for study had elapsed.

What had been so well begun was, in due time, finished in a similar manner. Mr. Smith rose with unexampled rapidity to the front ranks of his profession, and that too at a time when the Connecticut bar shone with a constellation of great names. His clearness of statement, his simple but vigorous logic, his fertility and felicity of illustration, all aided by a manly presence and a voice of prodigious power, gave him a mastery alike over the plainest and the most instructed audience. These high gifts were nerved by an iron will, and when once he was roused to an earnest effort, his course was marked with a crushing energy, which bore down all opposition. It is said that sometimes, in the consciousness of his power, he rode rough-shod over his adversary, though

in general his practice was signalized not only by justice but amenity.

It appears that although Mr. Smith thus rose to distinction, he still preserved the good-will of the people at large, in an uncommon degree. He soon passed through various stages of official advancement: in 1789, he represented his native town in the General Assembly; in 1795, he was sent to Congress; in 1800, he was a member of the State Council; in 1806, he was judge of the Superior Court, an office which he held for eleven years, when the state of his health compelled him to resign. In all these positions he was distinguished for his ability, his good sense, his right feeling, his patriotism, justice, dignity. Yet it is recorded that in this elevated career, he never ceased to be stamped with the simplicity of the country farmer. The farm was, indeed, the place which he seemed most to enjoy. His intercourse with country people was marked with a fellowship very rare in a professional man, and hence, no doubt, that general feeling of kindliness among the masses, which even yet cherishes his memory in his native valley, and indeed throughout his native State.

It is greatly to be regretted that none of the higher oratorical efforts of this great man are preserved. The reporting of speeches—so common now—was unknown in his day, and he had too little love of self-display to report what he said, himself. There was, in general, a modesty, a self-forgetfulness about him,

quite as remarkable as the greatness of his intellect. He shrunk from no public duty, but he coveted no public honors. When not officially called away, his home, his farm, and the house of worship—for he was a man of steadfast piety—were his chosen scenes and sources of interest. When I saw him, he was at the height of his fame: all eyes looked at him with admiration. It may be imagined, therefore, that a strong impression was made upon my mind, when—one evening chancing to be at his house—I saw him kneel down in the midst of his gathered family, including the servants, and offer up his evening prayer, with all the earnest simplicity and feeling of a child, addressing a revered but beloved father. There was something inexpressibly touching and affecting in the scene, and especially in the thrilling, pleading tones of the speaker, poured out as if from the fullness of an overflowing heart. It was, indeed, a scene never to be forgotten—a lesson never to fail of imparting instruction.*

* The family of Judge Smith has been marked with great vigor of mind and character. He assisted his brother Nathan—who had shared in his early poverty and depression—to fit himself for the bar, and he finally rose to great eminence—professional and political. He died at Washington—being then a Senator of the United States—Dec. 6, 1835, aged 65.

Truman Smith, nephew of Judge Smith, settled at Litchfield, and became a leading member of the bar. In 1848, he was elected to the Senate of the United States, and was distinguished for those masculine powers of oratory, combined with practical good sense, which marked his eminent relatives, just named. Though elected for a second term, he resigned his seat in 1854.

Nathaniel B. Smith, only child of the judge, inherited his farm, and

LETTER XXIV.

The Cold Winter and a Sharp Ride—Description of Danbury—The Hat Manufactory—The Sandimanians—Gen. Wooster's Monument—Death of my Brother-in-law—Master White—Mathematics—Farewell to Danbury.

My dear C******

We returned to Danbury after a tour of some five or six weeks. The succeeding autumn and winter presented no peculiar incident—with a single exception. There was, if I rightly remember, in the month of February,* a certain "cold Friday," which passed down to succeeding generations as among the marvels of the time. It had snowed heavily for three days, and the ground was covered three feet deep. A driving wind from the northeast then set in, and growing colder and colder, it became at last so severe as to force everybody to shelter. This continued for two days, the whole air being filled with sleet, so that the sun, without a cloud in the sky, shone dim and gray as through a fog. The third day, the wind increased, both in force and intensity of cold. Horses, cattle, fowls, sheep, perished in their coverings. The roads were blocked up with enormous drifts: the mails were

his love of agriculture, which he has pursued with great science and success. He has filled various public offices, but probably values among his highest honors, his medals for the best examples of stock and tillage, awarded him, on various occasions, by the Connecticut State Agricultural Society. He is now president of that institution (1856).

* This was, I think, in 1809, though it might have been a year later

stopped, traveling was suspended; the world, indeed, seemed paralyzed, and the circulation of life to be arrested.

On the morning of this third day—which was the ominous and famous Friday—word was brought to my sister that a poor family, to whom she had long been a kind of providence, about two miles off, was in danger of starvation. She knew no fear, and tolerated no weakness. A thing with her that ought to be done, was to be done. Therefore, a sack was filled with bread, meat, candles, and a pint of rum: this was lashed around my waist. The horse was brought to the door—I mounted and set off. I knew the animal well, and we had enjoyed many a scamper together. He was indeed after my own heart—clean-limbed, with full, knowing eyes, and small, pointed, sensitive ears. He had a cheerful walk, a fleet, skimming trot, a swift gallop, and all these paces we had often tried. I think he knew who was on his back; but when we got to the turning of the road, which brought his nostrils into the very tunnel of the gale, he snorted, whirled backward, and seemed resolved to return. I however brought him sternly to his work, gave him sharp advice in the ribs, and assured him that I was resolved to be master. Hesitating a moment—as if in doubt whether I could be in earnest—he started forward; yet so keen was the blast, that he turned aside his head, and screamed as if his nostrils were pierced with hot iron. On he

THE COLD FRIDAY. Vol. 1, p. 394.

went, however, in some instances up to the saddle in the drift, yet clearing it at full bounds.

In a few minutes we were at the door of the miserable hut, now half buried in a snow-drift. I was just in time. The wretched inmates—a mother and three small children — without fire, without food, without help or hope—were in bed, poorly clothed, and only keeping life in their bodies by a mutual cherishing of warmth, like pigs or puppies in a similar extremity. The scene within was dismal in the extreme. The fireplace was choked with snow, which had fallen down the chimney: the ill-adjusted doors and windows admitted alike the drift and the blast, both of which swept across the room in cutting currents. As I entered, the pale, haggard mother, comprehending at a glance that relief had come, burst into a flood of tears. I had no time for words. I threw them the sack, remounted my horse, and, the wind at my back, I flew home. One of my ears was a little frost-bitten, and occasionally for years after, a tingling and itching sensation there, reminded me of my ride, which after all left an agreeable remembrance upon my mind.

Danbury* is a handsome town, now numbering

* Danbury is one of the semi-capitals of Fairfield county, the courts being held here and at Fairfield, alternately. The main street is nearly two miles in length, and presents many handsome residences. The society is marked by more than ordinary intelligence and refinement. The Indian name of the place was *Pah-qui-o-que*, and it was first settled by the English in 1684. It has been prolific in distinguished men: the names of its early founders having been spread far and wide, and many

six thousand inhabitants; but in my time there were scarcely more than half that number. It is chiefly built on a long, wide street, crossed near the northern extremity by a small river, a branch of the Housatonic, which, having numerous rapids, affords abundance of mill-sites in its course. At this crossing, there were two extensive hat-factories, famous over the whole country, and belonging, the one to White, Brothers & Co., and the other to Tweedy & Co. Their hats were the rage with the fashionable Genins, St. Johns, Knoxes, and Beebes of that age. I believe, indeed, that these factories, with others of more modern date, are still maintained.

Nearly all the workmen in these establishments—of whom there were several hundred—at the time I am describing, were foreigners, mostly English and Irish. A large part of the business of our store was the furnishing of rum to these poor wretches, who bought one or two quarts on Saturday night, and fuddled themselves till Monday, and frequently till Tuesday. A factory workman of those days was thought to be born to toil, to get drunk, and make a hell of his home. Philanthropy itself had not then lifted its eye or its hopes above this hideous malaria of custom. We had imported these ideas from England and other foreign manufacturing countries, and they reigned over the

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of them being yet preserved in the present residents of the place. Among these, the names of Wildam, Mygatt, Hoyt, Tweedy, Benedict, White, Starr, Knapp, &c., are conspicuous.

public mind. That large humanity, which has done so much, in modern times, to remove vice and crime, and to elevate the public standard of morals, had not then set its Star in the West, calling the Wise and Good to a new revelation of life. It is a modern discovery that manufacturing towns may rise up, where comfort, education, morals, and religion, in their best and happiest exercise, may be possessed by the toiling masses. This is not only a modern, but an American discovery, and refutes volumes of abuse that long-eared philosophy has leveled at republicanism.

Danbury is not without other points of interest—historical and social. It was, as I have shown, the scene of one of those wanton and wicked outrages, perpetrated upon the people of Connecticut, and indeed of many other parts of this country, which made the British name offensive to God and man, during the Revolutionary war. In commemoration of the life and services of General Wooster, who fell at Ridgefield, in an encounter with these British marauders, there has recently been erected at Danbury a beautiful monument of Portland granite, forty feet in height, with the following inscription :

DAVID WOOSTER,
First Major-general of the Connecticut troops
in the Army of the Revolution;
Brigadier-general of the United Colonies.
Born at Hartford, March 2, 1710 or 11;
Wounded at Ridgefield, April 27, 1777, while defending
the liberties of America,
And nobly died at Danbury,
May 2, 1777.

The character of Wooster* was indeed a noble one, and the people of Danbury have shown a wise discernment in the construction of this beautiful memorial of his character and career.

One item more and I shall take leave of Danbury. About midway between the northern and southern extremities of the long main street, and a little to the west of it, there was a building of moderate size, somewhat between a church and a barn, in aspect. It was without tower or steeple, so it could not be the first: it was nicely built and tidily kept, and could not be the last. It was, in fact, the sanctuary of the Sandimanians, or, according to the popular accent, Sandiminians; a small sect of forty members then, and now dwindled to a still smaller number.

The history of its founder is well known. Robert Sandiman, a Scotchman, having adopted the tenets, and married the daughter, of Rev. John Glass—an able

* This monument stands on a solid platform, about twenty feet square, at the corners of which are massive stone posts, which support an iron railing. The plinth is richly moulded, and the name of WOOSTER appears in bold raised letters, upon the front or south side. The General is represented, in a beautifully sculptured relief, in the act of falling from his horse, at the moment he received the fatal ball. Above this, appears a delineation of the State arms; and higher still, the main shaft is ornamented with a trophy, consisting of a sash, sword, and epaulettes. On two opposite sides are various appropriate masonic and military emblems. The whole is surmounted with a globe, on which stands the American Eagle, bearing in his beak the wreath of victory. This fine column was consecrated by imposing ceremonies on the 27th April, 1854, at which the Governor of the State, with many distinguished citizens, deputations from various lodges, and a large concourse of people, assisted. The oration, by Hon. H. C. Deming, was deeply interesting, as well on account of its eloquence as its historical reminiscences.

divine, who seems to have been the originator of the Scotch Independents—became a distinguished defender of his theological views. After a time, he was invited to come to America by some of his admirers there, and accordingly he arrived in 1764, and settled among them—first at Boston, but finally taking up his residence at Danbury. He appears to have been much disappointed at the character of his adherents, and the general state of society in America. This was aggravated by his taking the tory side in the agitation which now verged toward the Revolution. His days were in fact embittered, and his flock reduced to a handful of followers. His death took place in 1771, and a simple marble slab, in the burial-ground, opposite the court-house, commemorates his name and history. He was doubtless a man of ability, but his career displays the usual narrowness and inconsistency of sectarianism founded upon persons, rather than principles. His doctrine was, that faith is a mere intellectual conviction—a bare belief of the bare truth. Of course so cold a religion, scarcely distinguishable in its principle from deism, and giving no satisfaction to that constant craving of the soul for a more exalted and spiritual life, could not prosper. It was only adapted to a few rigid minds like his own. His adherents in my time met at their little church on the afternoons of Sundays and Thursdays; they sat around a large table, each with a Bible. The men read and discoursed, as the spirit dictated: the

women were silent. Spectators were admitted, but the worshipers seemed not to recognize their presence. After a prayer and a hymn, they went to the house of one of the members, and had a love-feast. "Greet one another with a holy kiss," was their maxim and their practice.

These customs remain* to the present day, save only as to the kiss, which, according to the current report, was modified some years since. The congregation was rather mixed, and included the W .... R....s, a family of wealth and refinement, down to N. S...., the blacksmith. Mrs. W .... R .... was a woman of great delicacy of person, manners, and dress: her lace was the finest, her silks the richest, her muslin the most immaculate. She was in breeding a lady, in position an aristocrat, in feeling an exclusive. And yet, one day, as she walked forth, and chanced to turn the corner, close to the central meeting-house, wending her way homeward, she came suddenly upon the village Vulcan, above mentioned. He was in front of his shop, and being a man of full habit, and having just put down the heel of an ox, which he was shoeing, he was damp with perspiration. Nevertheless, the faith was strong within him: "Greet one another with a holy kiss!" rushed to his mind, and he saluted Mrs. W .... R...., as in duty bound.

* A friend writes me (1856) that the Sandimanian church at Danbury now numbers three male and fifteen female members. The congregation comprises about thirty persons.

She, a saint in profession, but alas, in practice a sinner, as doth appear—returned not the salute! Had she been of another sect, abstinence would have been a virtue, but in this, it was of course a crime. Upon this incident rocked and quaked the whole Sandimanian church for some months. At last the agitation subsided, and the holy kiss was thenceforward either abandoned or given with discretion. Such is the tale as it was told to me, nearly fifty years ago.

It may be remarked that Sandimanianism, which originated in a hard, sarcastic mind, subsided into a sort of amiable and tranquil Quakerism. Its members were noted for purity of life, and some of them for habits of abstraction, which marked themselves in a cold pallor upon the countenance. Seeming to be conscious of a chill at the heart, they sought to quicken the circulation of the Spirit, by outward observances and by peculiarities of worship, such as might distinguish them from other Christians. "I am better than thou, for I am other than thou," has often proved a consoling doctrine for the narrow people of narrow creeds.

A few brief sketches more, and I have done with Danbury. The health of my brother-in-law gradually failed, and at last, as winter approached, he took to his room, and finally to his bed. By almost insensible degrees, and with singular tranquillity of mind and body, he approached his end. It was a

trait of his character, to believe nothing, to do nothing, by halves. Having founded his faith on Christ, Christianity was now, in its duties, its promises, and its anticipations, as real as life itself. He was afflicted with no doubts, no fears. With his mind in full vigor, his strong intellect vividly awake, he was ready to shake hands with death, and to enter into the presence of his God. The hour came. He had taken leave of his friends, and then feeling a sense of repose, he asked to be left alone. They all departed save one, who sat apart, listening to every breath. In a few moments she came and found him asleep, but it was the sleep that knows no waking!

I continued in the store alone for several months, selling out the goods, and closing up the affairs of the estate. I had now a good deal of time to myself, and thumbed over several books, completing my reading of Shakspeare, to which I have already alluded. It happened that we had a neighbor over the way—a good-natured, chatty old gentleman, by the name of Ebenezer White. He had been a teacher, and had a great taste for mathematics. In those days it was the custom to put forth in the newspapers puzzling questions of figures, and to invite their solution. Master White was sure to give the answer, first. In fact, his genius for mathematics was so large, that it left rather a moderate space in his brain for common sense. He was, however, full of good feelings, and

was now entirely at leisure. Indeed, time hung heavy on his hands, so he made me frequent visits, and in fact lounged away an hour or two of almost every day, at the store. I became at last interested in mathematics, and under his good-natured and gratuitous lessons, I learned something of geometry and trigonometry, and thus passed on to surveying and navigation. This was the first drop of real science that I ever tasted—I might almost say the last, for though I have since skimmed a good many books, I feel that I have really mastered almost nothing.

LETTER XXV.

Farewell to Danbury—Hartford—My First Master and his Family—Merino Sheep—A Wind-up—Another Change—My new Employer—A new Era in Life—George Sheldon—Franklin's Biography.

My dear C******

I must now introduce you to a new era in my life. Early in the summer of 1811, I took leave of Danbury, and went to Hartford. On my arrival there, I was installed in the dry-goods store of C. B. K...., my father having made the arrangement some weeks before. My master was a young man of excellent disposition, with a pretty wife and two fat cherubs of children. I was kindly treated in this family, with which I took my meals. Many a happy

romp had I with the children—this exercise filling in some degree the aching void of my bosom, arising from isolation—for I was not only in a new place, but I was almost without friends or acquaintances. My master had no real turn for business, and spent much of his time away, leaving the affairs of the shop to an old fudge of a clerk, by the name of Jones, and to me. Things went rather badly, and he sought to mend his fortune by a speculation in Merino sheep*—then the rage of the day. A ram sold

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* The Merino sheep appears to be a breed which originated in the mountain districts of Estremadura, in Spain, in the time of the Roman dominion, from the careful mixture of celebrated European and Asiatic breeds. In the time of Tiberius, a ram of this stock was sold for a thousand dollars, an enormous price, if we consider the value of money at that period. The more tender breeds of sheep became extinct in Italy and Greece during the invasions of the northern barbarians, but the hardy Merinoes, having thriven in the mountains, survived, and have come down to modern times. All the European breeds, now celebrated for the fineness of their wool, are crosses of the Merino.

The first Merinoes brought into the United States were imported by Chancellor Robert R. Livingston—a pair of each sex—in 1802. M. Delessert sent a few others, soon after. Little attention, however, was paid to the subject, and it seems that about 1805, half-breeds were sold at a price below that of common sheep. Afterward, a larger importation was made by Col. Humphries, who had been our Minister to Spain, and our Consul, Jarvis: these were three hundred in number, and arrived in 1810. Humphries tells us that he had turned his thoughts to this subject before he left Spain, and as he seems to have consulted his muse in every thing that interested him, he had there written a poem, the burden of which is found in the following stanzas:

"Oh might my guidance from the downs of Spain,
Lead a white flock across the western main;
Famed like the bark that bore the Argonaut
Should be the vessel with the burden fraught!
Clad in the raiment my Merinoes yield;
Like Cincinnatus, fed from my own field;
Far from ambition, grandeur, care, and strife,
In sweet fruition of domestic life;

for a thousand dollars and a ewe for a hundred—a great discount certainly for gender; but Maria Antoinette Brown and her school had not yet equalized the sexes. Fortunes were made and lost in a day, during this mania. With my master, it was great cry and little wool; for after buying a flock and driving it to Vermont, where he spent three months, he came back pretty well shorn—that is, three thousand dollars out of pocket! This soon brought his affairs to a crisis, and so in the autumn I was transferred to the dry-goods store of J. B. H .....

My new employer had neither wife nor child to take up his time, so he devoted himself sedulously to business. He was indeed made for it—elastic in his frame, quick-minded, of even temper, and assiduous politeness. He was already well established, and things marched along as if by rail. For a time, we had another clerk, but he was soon dismissed, and I was the only assistant; my master, however, seldom leaving the shop during business hours. Had trade been in me, I might now have learned it. I think I may say, that I fulfilled my duty, at least in form; I was regular in my hours, kept the books duly journalized and posted. I never consciously wronged arithmetic to the amount of a farthing. I duly per-

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There would I pass with friends, beneath my trees,
What rests from public life, in letter'd ease."

This poetic aspiration became history: in 1809, when Madison was inaugurated, his coat was made of Merino cloth from a manufactory established by Humphries, and his small-clothes from one founded by Chancellor Livingston. See *Cyclopedia of Amer. Literature*, vol. i. p. 376

formed my task at the counter. Yet, in all this, I was a slave: my heart was not in my work. My mind was away: I dreamed of other things; I thought of other pursuits.

And yet I scarcely knew all this. I had certainly no definite plan for the future. A thousand things floated before my imagination. Every book I read drew me aside into its own vortex. Poetry made me poetical; politics made me political; travels made me truant. I was restless, for I was in a wrong position, yet I asked no advice, for I did not know that I needed it. My head and heart were a hive of thoughts and feelings—swarming in the sunny springtide of life—without the regulating and sedative supremacy of a clear and controlling intelligence. My imagination was a flame, playing around my yet clouded understanding, and giving to this its own wavering and blinding light.

It may seem to you, my dear C...., that I am treating with undue emphasis and detail this unspoken history of a boy in a country store. Yet such—in the main—is life, with the great as with the small. Remember, I am speaking of that crisis of existence, when an impulse to the right or left may determine the direction and the end of a whole career. You are a philosopher, and can not be indifferent to any experience that may throw light upon the history of the human heart. You are, besides, a parent, and as such, can not be too well advised of what passes in

the bosom of youth, and especially as they stand at the door of manhood. No one can know too well the mastery which slight events at this period may exercise over a long and fearful future. Therefore, pass not disdainfully over this page of my story!

My experience was, no doubt, in some degree exceptional. With considerable knowledge, gathered by glimpses, in a scramble, as I passed along in an irregular and uncertain road, I had really no education in the sense of mental discipline. What I knew was by halves, and it had been so acquired that my mind was a thicket of weeds and flowers, without a defined path to get into or out of it. All that I had was instinct, somewhat enlightened, perhaps, by my early religious training. On questions of right and wrong, in feeling and conduct, my conscience should have been a safe guide; but in respect to the understanding, as to logic of thought—I scarcely knew the process. My imagination was like an unbridled colt, and it carried me whither it would. In reflecting upon this in maturer years, I have compared my mind to that slippery bird of the sea—the loon—which usually comes up in the direction exactly opposite to that in which it goes down. In argument, in reflection, in deliberation, with myself or others—if I began upon one thing, I was pretty sure to get speedily stranded upon another. All that I knew of myself was, that I felt; I had not yet, in fact, learned the process of sober induction and methodical reasoning. I had just that

little learning which is a dangerous thing, because it imparts intoxication, not inspiration.

So far, then, my condition was certainly peculiar. But in regard to that impulse which rises up in the youthful bosom like a gale to the ship, coming in the midst of seeming calm, and bringing every sail and spar suddenly and by surprise to its work—I was like other boys at the threshold of a new and startling era in life. What gigantic strides seem then to be at command with the seven-leagued boots of gristle manhood! And yet, with such an impetus, the youth may yield himself to a word, a thought, which takes the helm, and guides the spirit, through weal or woe, to its doom.

"My boyhood vanish'd, and I woke,
Startled, to manhood's early morn—
No father's hand my pride to yoke,
No mother's angel voice to warn!
* * * * * *
The spark forever tends to flame—
The ray that quivers in the plash
Of yonder river, is the same
That feeds the lightning's ruddy flash.
The summer breeze that fans the rose,
Or eddies down some flowery path,
Is but the infant gale that blows
To-morrow with the whirlwind's wrath.
And He alone who wields the storm,
And bids the arrowy lightnings play,
Can guide the heart, when, wild and warm,
It springs on passion's wings away.

One angel minister is sent,
To guard and guide us to the sky,
And still her sheltering wing is bent,
Till manhood rudely throws it by.
Oh, then with mad disdain we spurn
A mother's gentle teaching; throw
Her bosom from us, and we burn
To rush in freedom, where the glow
Of pleasure lights the dancing wave—
We launch the bark, we woo the gale,
And reckless of the darkling wave
That yawns below, we speed the sail!"

Thus many a youth rushes upon his fate. Some, indeed, are always sober and judicious: they plod on wisely and prosperously, not so much on account of the influence of home instruction, nor indeed by happy accident, but through inherent steadiness of character. Yet these cases are not frequent. Nearly all pass through the straits of Scylla on one side and of Charybdis on the other. Some escape, but, alas, how many are fatally wrecked! how many only live on to scandalize society, to break the hearts of their parents, to debase and degrade themselves and their companions! It is sad to reflect upon the number of young men who are lost at this turning-point—this "doubling the Cape"—of life. Several of my earliest acquaintances have gone down, long since, to their graves, the victims of those hidden quicksands which beset the youthful voyager, at the very moment when his sails are filled with flattering hopes and generous

aspirations—yet, also, with presumptuous confidence In short, they were shoved out to sea with no pilot on board but their own passions, and destruction was but the too natural consequence.

That I escaped is no special merit of my own. I formed an acquaintance with George Sheldon, which soon ripened into friendship, and this had great influ ence on my future life. He was, at the time, a clerk in the establishment of Hudson & Goodwin,* a firm

* The following obituary notice, abridged from the Connecticut Courant of May 14, 1844, is worthy of insertion, as well for its just picture of a good man's life, as for the facts of general interest which it presents.

"Mr. George Goodwin, whose death was yesterday announced, was born in this city (Hartford) on the 7th day of January, 1757, and died the 13th day of May, 1844, being the oldest man in the town. He was descended from one of those ancient families who made their way from Newtown, Mass., through the wilderness, to find a new home on the banks of the Connecticut river.

"At the age of nine years he was placed as an apprentice in a printing-office, where was published a small weekly print, called the Connecticut Courant, the first paper printed in this town, and for many years the only one upon this river—the history of which is so intimately connected with that of the deceased as to demand notice. The first number was published by Thomas Green, October 29, 1764. In April, 1768, Mr. Green associated with him in this enterprise, Mr. Ebenezer Watson, and retired from it in December, 1770, leaving it in the hands of Mr. Watson, alone. In September, 1777, Mr. Watson died, and Mr. Goodwin, a young man of but twenty years of age, was left to conduct it. In January, 1778, he became a partner with the widow of Mr. Watson in the establishment, and so continued until her marriage with Mr. Hudson, in March, 1779, when he formed a partnership with that gentleman, which continued nearly forty years, or until 1815. Mr. Goodwin, after the dissolution of the concern, continued to superintend the paper until the year 1836, when he relinquished it to the present proprietor. But it can hardly be said that his connection with this paper ended at that time, for such were his habits of industry, and so fixed were his associations, and so long had he been identified with this establishment, that he made it one of the stipulations of his contract, that he should have a right to work in the office as formerly, when he

then known all over this hemisphere, as publishers of the Bible, Webster's Spelling-book, and the Connecticut Courant. They were, in the popular mind, regarded as the bulwarks of religion, education, and federalism—three pretty staunch supporters of the New England platform, in that epoch of the world.

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was so disposed—and for several years after did he avail himself of this privilege. Probably no man in this country, perhaps no man in the world, had pursued this business for so long a time—that is, for nearly eighty years. While under his auspices, this paper gained a circulation almost unknown to country papers, and for a long course of years gave a tone to the morals and policy of the State.

"He was always found on the side of religion and morals, nor was he ashamed to profess Christ before men: his great grief was that he had not done it earlier. He was a special friend of temperance, and imputed his good health and success in life largely, to a rigid abstinence from intoxicating drinks.

"His politics were learned in the school of the American Revolution. In his opinions he was firm and decided, but modest and unassuming. Without any advantages of education beyond that of a common school, he became a highly useful and intelligent editor, and one whose influence was extensively felt in this community. His mind was active and sprightly. He was frank and pleasant in his manners; he had a good share of wit and humor, and in his younger days, was the life of the circle into which he entered. He was one of the last of the old-school gentlemen among us, and he certainly was a good representative of that interesting class.

"It is hardly necessary to say how well he discharged all the duties of private life; how kind and beneficent he was to the poor, or how dear to his friends. Happy in his family circle, he passed those years, which are ordinarily years 'of labor and sorrow,' in cheerful gratitude to God, and humble hope in Christ, with few of the pains and sorrows of old age—until, after a sickness of a few days, he fell like a shock of corn fully ripe in the hope of a glorious immortality beyond the grave."

The following lines by Mrs. Sigourney are a worthy and pleasing tribute to this good man's memory:

OUR OLDEST MAN.

Meek patriarch of our city! art *thou* dead?
The just, the saintly, and the full of days,
The crown of ripen'd wisdom on thy head,
The poor man's blessing, and the good man's praise?

It is very seldom that plodding industry rises so high. Mr. Hudson was a homespun old respectability, of plain, strong sense, sturdy principles, and rather dry, harsh manners, having also a limp in the leg. He took charge of the financial department of the concern. Mr. Goodwin was a large, hale, comely old

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Would that our sons, who saw thee onward move
With step so vigorous and serenely sage,
Of thee might learn to practice, and to love
The hardy virtues of an earlier age.

For more than fourscore winters had not chill'd
The glow of healthful years, on lip, or cheek,
Nor in thy breast the warm pulsation still'd,
That moves with upright zeal to act and speak.
Ne'er from the righteous cause withheld by fear,
Of honest toil ashamed, nor proud of wealth,
But train'd in habits simple and sincere,
From whence republics draw their vital health.

To every kind affection gently true,
The husband and the father and the friend,
Thy children's children still delighted drew
Around the honor'd grandsire's chair to bend.
But now thy mansion hath its master lost,
Wrapp'd in its pleasant green, with trees o'erspread
And we, a patriot sire, who knew the cost
Of blood-bought freedom, in the day of dread.

We mourn thee, Father! On thy staff, no more
Thy cheerful smile shall greet us, day by day,
Nor the far memories of thy treasured lore,
Withhold the joyous listeners from their play.
Where stood that ancient race we fear to stand,
In foremost watch on life's beleaguer'd wall,
To bide the battle with a feebler hand,
Perchance to falter, and perchance to fall.

O God of Strength!—who takest from our head,
Our white-hair'd patriarchs, firm in faith and truth,
Grant us thy grace, to follow where they led,
A pure example to observant youth;
That though the sea of time should fiercely roll,
We so its billows and its waves may stem,
As not to lose the sunshine of the soul,
Nor our eternal rest in Heaven, with them.

gentleman, of lively mind and cheerful manners. There was always sunshine in his bosom and wit upon his lip. He turned his hand to various things, though chiefly to the newspaper, which was his pet. His heaven was the upper loft in the composition room; setting type had for him the sedative charms of knitting-work to a country dame. I have often seen him, cheerfully swinging back and forth, as is the wont of compositors, and tossing the type merrily over his thumb into the stick, as if he were at work by the thousand ems, and had a wife and nine small children dependent upon his labors!

George Sheldon, then, was the favored clerk of this ancient and honored firm. He was happily moulded by nature, and not unkindly treated by fortune. He was short of stature, but of a bearing at once modest and manly. His large understanding and vivid imagination were duly balanced—the first being always the master, the latter always the servant. He had been well educated in the schools of the city, even to the acquisition of the common Latin and Greek classics. He had read extensively, for one of his age, and with profit. When I met him, he was twenty; I but eighteen.

It is not easy to conceive of two persons more unlike than we were at that time. Why we coalesced, can only be accounted for from the affinity of opposition—a phenomenon not unknown in the chemistry of the mind and the affections. Tall men seek short

wives; large women favor little husbands. The blonde is smitten with black eyes and raven hair; the brunette falls in love with flaxen locks and azure looks. All nature's contradictions make all nature's peace. And so a friendship, which was only terminated by the grave, grew up between myself—a raw adventurer from the country—and George Sheldon, the educated, disciplined, well-balanced graduate of the city.

I must again apologize for, or perhaps rather explain, the introduction of these commonplace details. Were I writing for the popular favor, and sought success only through the current taste of the day, I should choose for the exercise of my pen a subject very different from that which gives birth to these pages. I know that the public crave high-seasoned meats. Romance must be thrilling; biography startling. History must be garnished with the lights and shadows of vivid dramatic representation. Who, then, of the great excited public would condescend to these simple memorials of apprentice boys in the middle ranks of life?

I might indeed cite as example for these passages, the autobiography of Franklin the printer, were it not that I fear this would be deemed too ambitious, as if I suggested a comparison in respect to the end as well as the beginning. Nevertheless, it is Franklin's history, as a boy of the middle class, successfully but laboriously working his way upward, that has

made it at once the most attractive and most useful biography of modern times. All over Christendom, it has met with the sympathy of the working classes, and it has done more than any volume within my knowledge, to give courage and heart to the sons of labor, as it has shown that the paths of ambition are open to them as to others, provided they be followed with Franklin's virtues—honesty, frugality, perseverance, and patriotism. What a contrast between the influence of such a biography as this, and that of a man whose life is only remarkable for success in bloodshed, or even in the more vulgar paths of vice, knavery, or crime! What a debt of gratitude does the world owe to Franklin! What a weight of condemnation should rest upon him who degrades and debases those who come within the sphere of his influence, by exciting and seductive narratives of the little or the great rascals who are sent as scourges and warnings to our race!

One of the most grateful things in my experience among the middle classes in England, France, and Germany, is, that I have been there recognized as the countryman of Franklin, and by virtue of this, have been often received as a friend. There is no part of Europe that I have visited, where the name of Franklin is not known and honored—except, perhaps, in Italy. There the atmosphere is not of a nature to permit such a history as his, to shed its beneficent light upon the hearts of the people. The

mythologies of the Virgin and the saints are deemed safer reading—safer, because they darken rather than enlighten the mind—than the history of a Boston printer, whose whole life is a lecture in behalf of the elevating power of liberty of thought and action. With this exception, Franklin's story of his early life, his humble apprenticeship, his patient struggles, his plodding industry, his rise, step by step, from poverty to independence, and all this within the possible and probable sphere of common life—seems actually to have been a gospel of good tidings to the European masses of modern times. Let me go on, then, my dear C...., countenanced, if not encouraged, by this example. Be it well understood, however, that if you are disheartened at the specimens I have furnished, I give you leave to depart, and with no offence to me. Good-by, my friend—if it must be so—and peace be with thee!

LETTER XXVI.

My Situation under my new Master—Discontent—Humiliating Discoveries — Desire to quit Trade and go to College — Undertake to Reeducate myself—A Long Struggle—Partial Success—Infidelity—The World without a God—Existence, Nature, Life, all contradictions, without Revealed Religion—Return after long Wanderings.

My dear C******

I have received your kind letter, giving your adhesion to what I have done, though counseling me to be less discursive in my narrative hereafter. Taking this in good part, and promising amendment, I proceed in my story.

I was, then, eighteen years of age, installed in a dry-goods store at Hartford, under a respectable and reasonable master. I had been sufficiently educated for my station. My parents had now removed from Ridgefield to Berlin, a distance of but eleven miles from my present residence, so that I had easy and frequent communication with them. My uncle, Chauncey Goodrich, then a Senator of the United States, lived in an almost contiguous street, and while in the city, always treated me with the kindness and consideration which my relation to him naturally dictated. In general, then, my situation was eligible enough; and yet I was unhappy.

The truth is, I had now been able to sit in judgment upon myself—to review my acquirements, to

analyze my capacities, to estimate my character—to compare myself with others, and see a little into the future. The decision was painful to the ambition which lurked within me. I had all along, unconsciously, cherished a vague idea of some sort of eminence, and this unhappily had nothing to do with selling goods or making money. I had lived in the midst of relations, friends, and alliances, all of which had cultivated in me trains of thought alien to my present employment. My connections were respectable: some of them eminent, but none of them rich; all had acquired their positions without wealth, and I think it was rather their habit to speak of it as a very secondary affair. Brought up under such influences, how could I give my heart to trade? It was clear, indeed, that I had missed my vocation.

Full of this conviction, I besought my parents to allow me to quit the store, and attempt to make my way through college.* Whether for good or ill, I

* When I wrote this letter, I was living at Courbevoie, near Paris. About that time, a gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Gilman), whom I had accidentally met in Paris, and of whom I had made some inquiries respecting certain eminent men of that State, came to visit me, and brought me several pamphlets, and among them a catalogue of Yale College, intimating that he supposed I must take an interest in the latter, as I was one of its graduates. I told him this must be a mistake, but he took the book and showed me that I was made an honorary A. M. by that institution in 1848! This, however, was the first time I ever heard of it. Thus, after all, though I never went to college, I got into the catalogue, but nearly forty years after these my youthful aspirations. I was a long time in passing my examination, and getting my degree; and if the learned gentlemen, who bestowed upon me this act of grace, had known how little of their sort of learning I really possessed, I doubt if they had ever granted to me so high a rank. Several years before, some-

know not, but they decided against the change, and certainly on substantial grounds. Their circumstances did not permit them to offer me any considerable aid, and without it they feared that I should meet with insuperable difficulties. I returned to the store, disheartened at first, but after a time my courage revived, and I resolved to re-educate myself. I borrowed some Latin books, and with the aid of George Sheldon, I passed through the Latin Grammar, and penetrated a little way into Virgil. This was done at night, for during the day I was fully occupied.

At the same time, I began—with such light and strength as I possessed—to train my mind—to discipline my thoughts, then as untamed as the birds of the wilderness. *I sought to think*—to think steadily, to acquire the power of forcing my understanding up to a point, and make it stand there and do its work. I attempted to gain the habit of speaking methodically, logically, and with accumulating power, directed to a particular object. I did all this as well by study as practice. I read Locke on the Understanding and Watts on the Mind. I attempted composition, and aided myself by Blair's Rhetoric.

This was a task, for not only was my time chiefly occupied by my daily duties, but it was a contest

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body addressed me an official letter, informing me that a similar honor had been bestowed upon me by the college at Williamstown, but I never liked to inquire about it, for fear it should turn out to be a joke. What, indeed, have my attainments to do with college honors?

against habit—it was myself against myself—and in this I was almost unaided and alone. I believe few have this experience, for most persons have progressive, methodical education. Their advance up the steep ascent of knowledge is gradual, measured step by step; and this process is performed in youth, and with the assistance of instructors, and all so gently, as to pass by without the consciousness of any great or painful effort, even by the subject of it. A person who has acquired an education in the usual way—under the steady training of teachers, from childhood to the period of graduation—does not appreciate in his feelings the amount of labor heaped up in this protracted struggle. If we consider, however, the momentum at last accumulated in the simple act of reading, for instance—the eye with electric celerity compassing every letter in a line, and the mind as quickly seizing upon every thought, mastering it, and passing on, the soul meanwhile giving to each conception its due feeling and emotion—we shall have a measure by which we may form some estimate of the magnitude of that structure in the mind, called *education*. It was a work of this sort, with the habits acquired in its formation, that I was to undo and do over again. It was my fortune to find that I had gone wrong, and must retrace my steps. I was to tear to pieces the labor, the practices, the associations of years, and at the same time I was to reconstruct the broken and shattered fragments

into a new and symmetrical edifice. I was to lay aside the slip-shod practice of satisfying myself with impressions, feelings, guesses; in short, of dodging mental labor by jumping at conclusions. I was to teach myself the art, and to train myself to the habit, of accumulating materials; of assorting them according to their several kinds; of weighing them in a just and scrutinizing balance; of rearranging them on principles of logic, and finally, of deducing from them a safe and reliable judgment. I was, indeed, to learn the greatest of all arts, that of reasoning, of discovering the truth, and I was to do this alone, and in the face of difficulties, partly founded in my mental constitution, and partly also in my training.

I did not at first comprehend the extent of my undertaking. By degrees I began to appreciate it: I saw and felt, at last, that it was an enormous task, and even after I had resolved upon it, again and again, my courage gave out, and I ceased my efforts in despair. Still, I returned to the work by spasms. I found, for instance, that my geography was all wrong: Asia stood up edgewise, in my imagination, just as I had seen it on an old smoky map in Lieutenant Smith's study: Africa was in the southeast corner of creation, and Europe was somewhere in the northeast. In fact, my map of the world was very Chinese in its projection. I knew better, but still I had thus conceived it, and

the obstinate bump of locality insisted upon presenting its outlines to my mind, according to this arrangement. I had similar jumbles of conception and habit, as to other things. This would not do: so I relearned the elements of geography; I revised my history, my chronology, my natural history—in all of which I had caught casual glimpses of knowledge. Finding my memory bad for dates, I made a list of chronological eras, from the Creation down, and riveted them by repetition, in my memory. What I read, I read earnestly. I determined to pass no word without ascertaining its meaning, and I persevered in this, doggedly, for five and twenty years.

Now, after all these my efforts, I only skimmed the surface of knowledge: I did not even reach the depths of a thorough college education. In some degree, I cleared up the wilderness of my mind; in some degree methodized my habits of thought; in some degree made myself the master of my faculties and my knowledge. I learned to think more clearly, to speak more logically, and to write more methodically—within the range of my acquisitions. Still, I only reached the precincts of what may be called education, in a just sense of the term. In after years, when I have been called upon to write upon a particular subject, I have generally been first obliged to sit down and study it, or at least to refresh my mind by reviewing it.

With this inadequate preparation, however, I rash-

ly began to form my own opinions—the most daring action of the mind. I ventured to question dogmas —moral, political, and religious. I passed through the several stages of curiosity, doubt, infidelity, as many others have done before me. I resolved to take nothing upon trust; I must examine and decide for myself. Beginning with things familiar and secular, I came at last to things remote, doctrinal, theological. I approached the sacred edifice of religion, and in a moment of presumption, tumbled it into a heap of ruins! And then? Ah, how impossible to paint the dark, drear horizon of the mind when it has put out the light of faith: extinguished even the star of hope! The world from that moment became to me a fearful enigma: all its harmony was gone: existence was a nightmare, heaven a fathomless abyss, earth an incomprehensible mystery. And Man, of all the creatures upon earth, was the most mysterious—above all things, and yet below all things. The bird had organs adapted to its wants—feet for the land and wings for the air. The fishes had fins suited to their element; the quadrupeds were all provided with the means of securing happiness according to their several tastes and faculties. Wherever there was a want, the means of satisfying it were bestowed. Every thing was consistent with itself. Nothing was made in vain: in the whole range of nature, there was no absurdity, no contradiction, no mistake. Every thing attained its end, every thing fulfilled its design save Man

alone! He had wants for which there was no provision: he had hunger and thirst of the soul, yet there was nothing to feed the one, or quench the other! He had the gift of hope, but was hopeless; the faculty of faith, with nothing on which faith could set its foot. He had anticipation—a looking forward into the future—wafting him thither like a trade-wind, and breathing of the tropic air of immortality. He yearned for something higher than earth, but was without wings to fly, or an object amid the prevailing waters—the universal deluge of doubt—upon which he could find repose! The dove of hope was sent forth, but came back with no olive-branch of peace, no promise of a shore to this bleak sea of nothingness! The veriest insect, the worm, the reptile, each and all, had every thing needful to perfect its being. Man alone seemed created to live in doubt, and to perish in disappointment. The inferior things of earth were perfect; the conscious lord of creation was a stupendous blunder! Thus seemed the universe; thus seemed man, without God—without religion.

"I had a dream, which was not all a dream—
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung, blind and black'ning, in the moonless air.
* * * * *
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside

The dying embers of an altar-place,
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things,
For an unholy usage: they raked up,
And shivering, scraped with their cold, skeleton hands,
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame,
Which was a mockery: then they lifted up
Their eyes, as it grew brighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects—saw and shriek'd and died—
E'en of their mutual hideousness, they died!"

Such is the fearful, overwhelming picture of the Earth, if you pluck the sun from the heavens: bring back that glorious orb, and all its light and harmony and beauty are restored. In this, the Natural World is but an image of the Moral World.

This Earth without a Sun to give it light,
Would roll a wintry planet robed in night.
All that we see of beauty—trees and flowers—
All that we hear of music in their bowers,
Live on the bounty of that Orb above—
Nature's exhaustless source of life and love.
And Man, if not illumed of Heaven's light,
Renew'd each morn and stealing through the night,
Dark as a planet exiled from the sun,
His savage course of crime and shame would run.
As blushing flowers with spreading odors rise—
As balmy zephyrs steal from southern skies—
As rills unchain'd with gladdening murmurs play—
As birds return and pour the rapturous lay—
As nature rises from its wintry night—
All at the bidding of the Source of Light—
So every virtue blooming in the soul,
Is warm'd to life by Heaven's kind control!

Indeed, take religion from man, and you dethrone God from the sky: you banish the light from the soul, you convert its highest faculties into elements of fear, terror, and despair. Love, that seems to breathe of heaven, to lift us on its wing toward a better and happier and holier clime, sinks into lust; affection into selfishness; friendship into an illusive dream. In this view, man is only a superior sort of beast, to live, despair, and perish. Bring back religion, and the light returns to the mind: under its influences, the warm pulses of affection and friendship and piety and poetry once more beat in the bosom: the winter of desolation gives way to the spring-tide of hope. Man is no longer a beast, existence no longer a riddle, creation no more a contradiction. Nature, before a stupendous lie, is now a glorious truth!

To this conclusion I came at last, though after a long and painful struggle. God was as much revealed to man as the earth, the sky, the sun: that was now settled in my mind, but it was not enough. What was our relation to Him? What was human destiny? What meant this inward faith that makes of the Creator an object of worship, of love, of hope, of confidence? What means the heart of prayer in every human breast? Is it only an instinct, telling us to pray, and then leaving us to perish? Is that the way of God? Does He tell us to hope, that He may cheat us of his promises? Has God made man

to bear through life the burden of doubt, and to carry it with him to the grave? Is there, in short, no revelation for man beyond the simple fact that there is a God—told us by our common sense, by our instinct, by the voice of nature and of creation? In these things His work is complete; in that it is evidently imperfect. Man has in him desires, wants, anticipations, exigencies, which are not satisfied by this mere light of nature. Without a further revelation, he is like the bird, made to fly, yet without wings; like the fish, formed to swim, yet without fins. He is an anomaly in the universe: the only thing that walks erect in God's image, is the only thing that God has made in vain, and worse than in vain!

There is, then, another revelation, for we must not charge the Omnipotent with incompetence, the Omniscient with ignorance, the Omnipresent with forgetfulness. We must not, in his greatest work, discover a negation of all his perfections, conspicuous in all other things. What, then, is this revelation? It was given to Adam face to face, by the Almighty; it has since descended in various ways, and at different eras, upon mankind; it has existed, and still exists, in all nations, though it may be seen by many races as through a glass darkly. But the whole force of God's highest revelations to man, is accumulated in the Bible, and especially in the Gospel—the life, character, and redemption of Christ. The unenlightened may be led by duller light: this is adapted to civil-

ized nations. Those may find their hunger and thirst of soul appeased by what nature yields; but the instructed man needs the full effulgence of such a revelation as this.

And thus, after many wanderings, like one long lost in the wilderness—like one wearied and worn with struggling in a marsh, I came back to the conviction of my fathers—that the Bible is the revealed will of God; as much adapted to us, as necessary for us, as the light to the eye, the air to the lungs: as indispensable to the life of the soul, as food and drink to the body, in which the soul is enshrined.

This work was not performed at once, or by one continuous effort; it was a long internal struggle, coming upon me in spasms—sometimes by day and sometimes by night. Often it subsided into settled doubt or desponding apathy; often it returned like a tempest to agitate and overwhelm me. It was, indeed, prolonged through several years, and even after I had seemed to come to the dry land, like the ark amid the subsiding deluge, difficulties and doubts sometimes haunted me. I was, in fact, not yet a believer. Infidelity is a long, dark voyage, and offers no secure haven of rest or repose. I have been acquainted with several professed deists and atheists—some of the very first order of mind—yet I have never found one who was not, in fact, afloat on a sea of uncertainty, tossed with doubt and racked with anxiety.

My stumbling-blocks, at this period, were chiefly

of that class called metaphysical, yet they were to me real, earnest, operative. The existence of evil in a world made and governed by God; the free agency of man, deriving from the Almighty his being and his breath; the moral responsibility of creatures, dependent for all things upon the Creator; the seeming predestination flowing from Omnipotence, with the consciousness of liberty of thought and action planted in every bosom: these and other rocks in this voyage of the immortal mind — strewn with the wrecks of millions—were still anxious mysteries to me. And then, that dreadful incompatibility upon which audacious human reason drives us—that every thing must have a beginning, and yet just as certainly, that all things spring from the Eternal! What a stunning blow, leveled at the pride of logic, is this? How is the mind humbled, admitting as it must, that all we see and know of time and eternity, is but the vibration of a pendulum, whose spring is hidden from our sight! Long, often and anxiously, did I return to these questions, thundering—sometimes almost in frenzy—at the sullen, silent, impenetrable door, which holds their solution from the view. I learned at last that I was only doing what had been done by thousands before—that I was attempting what the wisest and strongest had given up in despair. I saw that the mind was bounded in its powers as well as the body; that as the latter could not defy the laws of gravitation, so the former could not rend the curtain

that God had hung between the creature and the Creator. I bowed at last; I ceased to agonize upon things beyond my reach. I turned to my actual duties; I cultivated the gifts of nature and Providence vouchsafed to me; I cherished the lights and not the shadows of existence. And once more I was upon the land! I was again at home; I had indeed wandered, yet not perhaps unprofitably, for I had learned to find peace and contentment in what God had bestowed upon me, without seeking that forbidden fruit of knowledge, of which He has said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die."

During the dark and cloudy period which I have just sketched, George Sheldon was my constant companion. I had made other acquaintances, and had other friends, but he was first, if not in my affections, at least in my confidence. He had a far more commanding intellect, more knowledge, more depth of reflection, more range of thought and experience, than myself. I consulted him in my studies; I submitted my progress to his examination; I showed him my compositions, and invited his criticisms.

Some persons seem to write with a certain maturity of thought and expression, almost upon their first attempts; others only attain the art of composition by long and patient labor. As for myself, I came to what I possess by reiterated trials. I do not know of a decent thing—not even a letter—that I wrote before I was twenty. How my monitorial guide did

laugh at some of my first attempts at composition, and especially at my tilts and tournaments upon Parnassus!

As I have said, we were unlike, and in nothing so much as in our mental constitution. His taste was mature, mine crude and fantastic; his mind was logical, mine irregular and discursive; his was circumspect, modest, prudent—mine daring, rash, audacious. In our discussions, he constantly said to me, "Stick to the point!" In regard to my writings, he often remarked, "You have more illustrations than ideas." In an argument, he would observe, "Stop a moment: do you know what we are talking about?" When we approached some metaphysical gulf, he would say, "Come, come, I have looked over there, and I can assure you there is nothing to be gained by it."

Above and beyond all this, my friend aided me in the more serious business of settling my religious opinions. He had thought long and profoundly upon the agitating questions which I have mentioned, and in considering them I had the benefit of his clear intelligence and just judgment. That I escaped shipwreck, was doubtless owing in some degree to him: I certainly reached the shore sooner than I could have done alone.

The importance of such counsel, at this period, can not be estimated without considering that I had been brought up under the impression that an infidel—nay, a doubter, a questioner, even—was a monster,

who challenged not only the reprobation of man, but the instant wrath of God. The preaching I heard, the tone of society around me, confirmed this feeling. I dared not ask advice, especially of the devout, for I dreaded to confess myself that fearful thing—an unbeliever! At that time I slept in an upper room of a large block of brick buildings, without another human being in them, and never have I known the nights so black, so long, so dismal, as during the periods when I awoke from sleep, and in the solitude of my chamber, wrestled with the tormenting questions already alluded to, which came like Inquisitors, to put me upon the rack of anxiety and doubt. The friendly sympathy and judicious guidance of my sturdy and steadfast friend, saved me, perhaps, from despair.

I have since this period often thought, with a feeling of self-reproach, of the moral and mental obliquity involved in infidelity, especially on the part of one brought up as I had been. What is infidelity—here in a Christian land? An assumption that God has left to the world no authenticated testimony of his Will. Revelation is a fable: religion a bugbear. What, then, is the condition of man? History—recent, reliable, unmistakable—has given the answer. He who runs may and must read. During the first French Revolution, the government abolished religion, and the people sanctioned the decree. Let us draw nigh and contemplate the spectacle of a

nation without a God, without a faith—without hope, and without fear. Look at Paris, at that period—the world's metropolis of art, taste, fashion, and refinement, rejoicing in its deliverance from the nightmare of religion! Look, and you will see that marriage was a farce, and that truth had sunk into contempt. The streets were filled with indecency, and the saloons were no better than garnished brothels. Death was divested of its solemnity, and the grave of its sanctity. Even kindred could not spare time from their levities and debaucheries to bury their deceased relatives. And why should they? They had gone to their eternal sleep, and it was illogical to care for the manes of those who had ceased to be. Nothingness—annihilation of the soul—left no sympathy for its worn-out and cast-off vestment, the body. There was no hereafter, no heaven, no elevating hope, no salutary fear. There was no reality but the present. No hymn of praise, no prayer, no rising incense, lifted the soul above this dreadful revelry. Man was left to cherish his baser propensities, without a wish or a thought, which could drag him out of the miry clay and the horrible pit!

This spectacle is as revolting to the moral taste of man, as is a mass of filth—reeking with corruption—to his senses. And yet this is the condition to which infidelity inevitably tends. It is religion alone—revealed religion—which saves the world from this state of degradation. Paris has written that fact in

fire and in blood. Is this religion, then, a lie? Is revelation, which thus works man's redemption here on earth—to say nothing of the future—a fraud? What then is God—the infidel's God? A being who made man to live and die and perish, only as an ingenious and gifted brute! He is not the author of that religion which ennobles man, exalts his faculties, his tastes, his aspirations, and constantly seeks to make him but little lower than the angels. He is not the God of good, but of Evil—not the Author of Light, but of Darkness—not the King of Heaven, but of Hell. This is the infidel's God.

Where, in Nature, is this fearful thing written? Not in the sun or the sky or the seasons, for these tell us that God is good. Not in the human heart, for this feels that God is true. Not in the eye that loves beauty, nor the ear that loves music. Every sense whispers that God is Love. It is indeed a dreadful obliquity, which leads the mind to refuse to see God in the Bible Revelation, and to refuse to accept Christianity as his gospel of good and glorious tidings to man.

LETTER XXVII.

Hartford forty years ago—The Hartford Wits—Hartford at the present time—The Declaration of War in 1812—*Baltimore Riots—Feeling in New England—Embargo—Non-intercourse, &c.—Democratic Doctrine that Opposition is Treason.*

My dear C******

The city of Hartford, ever noted for its fine situation, in one of the fertile and beautiful vales of the Connecticut, is now distinguished for its wealth—the fruit of extraordinary sagacity and enterprise on the part of its inhabitants—as well as for its interesting institutions—literary, charitable, and philanthropic. It presented, however, a different aspect at the time of which I am speaking. It had, indeed, formerly enjoyed some reputation as a sort of literary focus—it being the residence of Trumbull, the author of McFingal, of Hopkins, the bludgeon satirist, author of the "Hypocrite's Hope," of Theodore Dwight, and some others, known in their day as the "Hartford Wits." This distinction was well deserved, for it is rare indeed that three satirical poets, of so much vigor, are found working together. It is especially rare to find them, as in this instance, united in an amicable as well as a literary brotherhood.

In my time Hopkins was dead; Trumbull had left off poetry for a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court, and Dwight was devoted to the Connecticut

Mirror—a newspaper distinguished all over the country for its vigilant and spicy vindication of federalism. His New-Year's verses were always looked for with eagerness, for they usually contained a review of events, with dashes at the times, in which the doings of democracy were painted in the unsparing colors of Hudibrastic ridicule. Many passages of these are now worthy of being read, as well on account of their illustration of the spirit of the time, as their keen and cutting satire.

On the whole, however, Hartford was then a small commercial town, of four thousand inhabitants, dealing in lumber, and smelling of molasses and Old Jamaica—for it had still some trade with the West Indies. Though the semi-capital of the State—the yearly sessions of the legislature being held there and at New Haven, alternately—it was strongly impressed with a plodding, mercantile, and mechanical character. There was a high tone of general intelligence and social respectability about the place, but it had not a single institution, a single monument, that marked it as even a provincial metropolis of taste, in literature, art, or refinement. The leading men were thrifty mechanics, with a few merchants, and many shopkeepers, society of course taking its hue from these dominant classes. There were lawyers, judges, and public functionaries—men of mark—but their spirit did not govern the town. There were a few dainty patricians, who held themselves aloof, secure of

that amiable worship which in all ages is rendered to rank. But where are they now? The answer would be a lesson and a warning to those who build their claims to homage on pretense. Such was the state of things, at the time I arrived in this city.

Some time after, a new era began to dawn, the light of which is still visible in the very air and aspect of the place. Let me give you a few measures of this striking progress. In 1810, the population of Hartford was three thousand nine hundred and fifty-five: in 1856, it is about twenty-five thousand. The American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, Trinity College, the Retreat for the Insane, the Wadsworth Atheneum—all excellent institutions—have been founded since my arrival in the town. The churches —then four in number—have increased to twenty-five, and by their towering and tasteful spires, give the place, as you approach it, the aspect of a Holy City. Every creed and shade of creed is represented, from Puritan orthodoxy up and down, to Roman Catholic, Second Advent, and Synagogue worshipers. There were three weekly journals, five and forty years ago; now there are two dailies, eight weeklies, and two monthlies. The manufacture of books, machines, carpets, pianos, hardware, hats, rifles, pistols—all established within forty years—now employ a capital of five millions of dollars. Colt's pistol-factory, with its accessories, is a marvelous example of ingenious art and liberal enterprise. The aggregate Bank Capital

is about six millions. The various Insurance Companies spread their protection against fire, far and wide —reaching into almost every State in the Union. Is not this progress?

I could find gratifying themes in pursuing this general train of events, especially as the prosperity of Hartford marks the general progress of society in Connecticut. But chronological propriety impels me, for the present, in a different direction. Leaving the humble path of autobiographical gossip, I must now, hackneyed as the subject may seem, take you within the wide and sweeping vortex of national history. Here, indeed, my own story leads, and here you are bound to follow. I must tell you of the war of 1812, for in this I was a soldier, and took my turn in the tented field! And besides—though we have plenty of histories on the subject, we have, so far as I know, very few pictures of the living and moving panorama of town and village life, during those three years of national anxiety and humiliation.

About midsummer in the year 1812, the news came that Congress, with the sanction of the President, had declared war* against Great Britain.

* The Declaration of War was ratified by the President on the 18th of June, and the proclamation was issued the next day. The principal grounds, assigned by the President for this act, were the impressment of seamen by Great Britain, her paper blockades, unsupported by an adequate force, and various Orders in Council. *Let it be remembered that peace was made by our government in* 1814, *without saying a word about impressment*—the main ground of the war—*and that the Orders in Council were repealed within four days after our declaration of*

Sagacious men, no doubt, had foreseen this, but it came upon the mass of the people here, at the North, like a thunderbolt. I remember perfectly well the dark and boding cloud that gathered over the public mind upon the reception of the news, and this was deepened into anxiety and alarm by the tragic story of the Baltimore riot, which speedily followed. The doctrine had been announced, as well in Congress as elsewhere, by the democratic leaders, that when war was declared, opposition must cease — a doctrine which is more fit for the liveried slaves of despotism than a free people—but which democracy has since maintained to the bitter end. I invite your particular attention to this historical fact, for here is the key not only to the slanders heaped up against New England at the time, for her opposition to the war, but to the pertinacity with which they have since been urged. Even to this day, the "Hartford Convention," "Connecticut Blue Lights," &c., are the grizzly monsters with which the nursing fathers and mothers of democracy frighten their children into obedience—just before the elections!

It is well to remember another fact—as explaining not only events which followed the declaration of war, but some others in our history. Jefferson democracy, from the beginning, made hatred of England its chief stock in trade. This feeling, from a

war, and before a gun had been fired in the conflict! For what, then did we spend one hundred millions of dollars and thirty thousand lives?

variety of causes, is indigenous to the masses of our people. It is greatly increased, as well in amount as in vehemence, by the large foreign element in our population, it being a curious fact that emigrants and refugees of all nations, come hither with an active dislike of England. Democracy at the beginning, and democracy still, avails itself of this sentiment—native as well as foreign. The main cause of the overthrow of the federalists, was, that they had to bear the burden of alleged friendship to England.

The war party perfectly well understood, and of course used, this hostility to England; and the British government, as if to make the conflict inevitable, added to the inherent fuel of popular prejudice, the flame of indignation arising from repeated insult and injury. In this state of things, the foreign population, already very numerous, exercised a powerful influence, not only in bringing on and sustaining the war, but in imparting something of their own violence to the discussions of the time. It is notorious that at this period, a large number of foreigners, with feelings lacerated by exile, and all turned into channels of hostility to Great Britain,* held influential positions, either as members of Con-

* John Randolph complained that almost every leading press in favor of the war, was conducted by men who had but recently escaped from the tyranny or the justice of the British government. He gave as instances the Aurora and the Democratic Press, of Philadelphia, one edited by Duane and the other by Binns; the Whig at Baltimore, edited by Baptiste Irving; and the Intelligencer at Washington, by Gales. Foster, the British Minister at Washington when the war was declared,

gress or editors of papers, and these—co-operating with the democrats—infused into the war partisanship, a spirit of intolerance and rancor, perhaps without example in our history. It was not surprising, therefore, that riot and bloodshed should come at the beginning, or that inveterate prejudice should be perpetuated to the end.

In the city of Baltimore there was a paper called the Federal Republican, edited by a highly respectable and talented young gentleman, named Alexander Hanson. In announcing the declaration of war, this journal also announced, in terms moderate but firm, a determination to continue to speak with the same freedom as before. This was heresy, which democratic papacy deemed worthy of fire and fagot. The decree had gone forth that independence was conspiracy, and opposition was treason. The mob at Baltimore, largely composed of foreigners, in the spirit of their leaders, deemed the conduct of the editor of the Republican worthy of instant punishment. Two days after his offense—that is, on the evening of the 22d of June—an infuriated rabble, headed by a French apothecary, proceeded to his printing-office, demolished the building, and laid the

stated soon after in the British House of Commons, that among the members of Congress who voted for the war, there were no less than six late members of the Society of United Irishmen! Randolph, in allusion to the spirit of menace and intolerance which was manifested in Congress by the war party, sarcastically suggested, more than once, that he felt himself in danger of being tarred and feathered, for expressing his honest convictions. See *Hildreth's History*, second series, vol. iii. 317.

whole establishment in ruins. Hanson, fortunately, was in the country, and his partner, though pursued, and hunted from house to house, finally escaped. The magistrates offered no opposition, and the mob, thus encouraged by tolerance and success, proceeded to wreak their patriotic vengeance in various directions, and upon a variety of objects. A suggestive specimen of their fury was manifested in burning down the house of a free negro, who had spoken in friendly terms of the British nation!

The Federal Republican was temporarily re-established at Georgetown, in the District of Columbia: after a time, however, it was removed to Baltimore,—Hanson and his friends deeming it their duty to vindicate the independence of the press, thus violently assailed. They expected a struggle, and prepared for it. They applied to the authorities for protection, but the mayor refused to interfere, and left town, doubtless for the purpose of permitting the mob to have its way. As evening approached, they gathered around the printing-office, and began the attack. Hanson was attended by Gen. Henry Lee and Gen. Lingan, both revolutionary officers, and some twenty other friends. These received the attack, the doors and windows being first strongly barricaded. Nothing, however, could resist the assailants: they burst in, and were fired upon by the defenders, one man being killed, and several wounded. The authorities now interfered, and upon an express stipulation of

protection, Hanson and his party surrendered and were conducted to prison. On their way, they were crowded upon, insulted, and threatened by the rabble. The promise of the authorities was not kept: the prison was left unguarded, the licensed mob broke in. In the confusion which followed, six or seven of the prisoners escaped: two were saved by the humanity and presence of mind of a prisoner confined for crime, and who diverted the pursuit by some ingenious fiction. The fate of the rest was horrible indeed. They were thrown down the steps of the jail, where they lay in a bleeding and mangled heap for three hours, being tortured by kicks, penknives stuck into their flesh, and hot candle-grease dropped into their eyes. This revelry was embellished with cries of "Jefferson! Jefferson!" "Madison! Madison!" and other democratic watchwords.

General Lingan expired amid these tortures; General Lee survived, but was made a cripple for life. Hanson was sent out of the city, concealed in a hay cart. One poor fellow was tarred and feathered, and carted through the city; when he fell back as if dead, the feathers were set on fire to revive him. Having committed various other similar outrages, the mob at last ceased its labors. The city authorities examined the case, and laid the blame at the door of the contumacious editor, while a Baltimore jury, without hesitation, acquitted the rioters!

The leaders of the war party, as well in their pa-

pers as in their speech, took the side of the rioters, and put the responsibility upon their victims. The example thus set and thus countenanced, was followed in various places, and especially at Norfolk and Buffalo. A spirit of menace spread over the whole country, and even at Hartford there was a ferment among the advocates of the war, which threatened to break out into open violence, against those who dared to condemn it. This rose to such a point that the authorities deemed it necessary to exercise vigilance and be prepared to meet any such contingency.

Such was the first chapter in the war of 1812; and it is, I repeat, important to be remembered, for it exhibits at once the principle and the practice of the dominant party in relation to that contest. It assumed then, as I have already stated, and it has ever maintained since, that opposition was treason. On this principle it is that democracy and its disciples have since written the history of New England at this period, and upon this have consigned her to unmitigated reproach. But partisan history is not a final judgment: truth and justice survive, and already this high court of appeal is, if I mistake not, rendering a very different verdict.

If thus the first news of the coming conflict caused a general gloom in the public mind at the North, reflection only served to deepen it. The remembrances of the war of the Revolution had not wholly passed away.

Connecticut had especially suffered by the inroads of the enemy: her towns and villages—New Haven, Danbury, Norwalk, Fairfield, New London, and others—having experienced all the horrors of massacre, conflagration, and violence. It was natural that an event which suggested a renewal of the conflict, and with the same proud and powerful enemy, should have struck deep into the hearts of the people. And besides, two-thirds of the inhabitants throughout New England, were politically opposed to the Administration which now conducted the affairs of the country, and this opposition was rendered intense by a conviction that, for a considerable period, the course of the government had been ruinous, if not hostile, to the interests of this section of the country. They were still federalists, and of the Washington type. They were for the good old way in politics, religion, and morals. They had, as I have before stated, a special dread of democracy, which had originated with Jefferson, and which—catching something of the spirit of the French Revolution, and being violently propagated in the United States by foreigners, drunk with the fanaticism of that day—was deemed by the sober people of the North as tainted with infidelity and licentiousness, threatening alike to the peace of society and the stability of our institutions.

This party, thus formed, had triumphed in the country at large, and now for twelve years had administered the government. During that period, a

series of acts—the Embargo, Non-importation,* &c.—had been adopted, which seemed like blows aimed at New England, where the interests of the people were specially involved in commerce. In every point of view, these were deemed as having proved disastrous: not a single national object, professed to be aimed at,

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* The series of acts here alluded to, and called the "*Restrictive Measures*," originated in the various decrees of France and England, then engaged in deadly hostilities with each other. These decrees consisted of the *British Orders in Council*, 16th May, 1806, declaring the ports and rivers of France, from Brest to the Elbe, in a state of blockade, and condemning to seizure and confiscation such vessels as violated this decree.

November 21, following, Bonaparte issued his famous *Berlin Decree*, declaring the British Islands in a state of blockade.

January 6, 1807, the British government retaliated, *prohibiting the entire coasting trade with France.* November 11, following, came the *British Orders in Council*, prohibiting all neutral nations from trading with France or her allies, except upon the payment of tribute.

December 17, Bonaparte retaliated by his *Milan Decree*, confiscating every vessel found in any of his ports which had allowed herself to be searched, or had paid the tribute demanded by England.

Thus American commerce, between these two wrestling giants, was seriously embarrassed, though, as it appears, it was not greatly diminished. The carrying trade was extensive, and our country grew rich and prosperous. Our exports were a hundred millions of dollars: our shipping a million and a half of tons. (*See Lloyd's Speech in the Senate of the United States, November* 21, 1808.) In this state of things, Mr. Jefferson astounded the country by proposing an embargo upon all shipping within the United States—the avowed object being to protect our commerce from the European belligerents. No measure could have been more objectionable to the ship-owners, in whose behalf it was ostensibly proposed. It passed into a law December 22d, 1807. This was hailed as a "magnanimous measure" by France; at first it was received with alarm by England, against whom it was really leveled. Mr. Jefferson believed that it would withhold from England our produce, and starve her into submission; at the same time, he no doubt desired to benefit France, by thus inflicting a heavy blow upon her adversary. That such was one design of the embargo was proved by supplementary acts, forbidding intercourse between the United States and the contiguous British Provinces. "How," it was asked, "can a law which

had been attained by these measures. The sincerity of the government was, indeed, deeply questioned, for there seemed to be evidences that in professing one thing, it really sought to attain others. Despite the long indictment set forth in the Declaration of War against Great Britain, it was extensively be-

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forbids a Vermont farmer from going into Canada to sell potash, protect our shipping from being seized by the European belligerents ?"

There was, perhaps, never an act of greater despotism than that of the embargo. It was not limited in time or space: it seemed universal and perpetual. It consigned to ruin and bankruptcy thousands of our citizens; it spread gloom and despair in our seaports; it left our ships rotting at the wharves; it drove our seamen into foreign service. It not only inflicted these evils upon our own country, but in some respects it benefited Great Britain, against whom it was leveled. It stimulated the British West Indians to vary their crops, and make themselves independent of our products; it enriched Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick by turning into their hands the supplying of bread-stuffs and naval stores; it built up their navigation at the expense of ours; it gave to other nations the rich carrying trade of the world.

Thus this measure proved to be, in practice, as destructive as it was erroneous in principle. What would the world think of a universal and perpetual embargo on our shipping now? And it was almost as absurd in 1807 as it would be in 1856. It was, in fact, sinister as to its origin, absurd as a measure of policy, wrong in principle, and abortive in its effects. It was, nevertheless, continued in force until March, 1809, a period of nearly fifteen months, having spread poverty and ruin over great part of New England. As a substitute for this measure, a non-importation act was passed, prohibiting, for one year, all commercial intercourse with both France and England.

On the 1st of May, 1810, Congress passed an act excluding all British and French armed vessels from entering the waters of the United States; but providing, also, that if either of these nations should modify its decrees before the 3d of March, 1811, intercourse with it should be renewed. This condition was apparently complied with by France (though it afterward appeared to be otherwise), and in November it was announced by the President's proclamation. The difficulties with Great Britain, as to her blockade and Orders in Council, however, continued, and constituted one of the principal grounds of the war, as set forth in the Declaration. A few days after this declaration, however, news arrived that these acts had been repealed, on the 22d of June,

lieved that this measure had its true origin in an intrigue for the presidency.* The people did not believe the war necessary: they did not feel that it was declared for patriotic purposes. Above all, they held that the country was in no state of preparation for such a struggle; and they doubted the fitness and capacity of the administration to carry it on with vigor and success.

These were the views of the mass of the people in New England. Nor were they alone. Many of the leaders of the democratic party were adverse to this measure; Mr. Madison, the President, believed it to be rash, and was only persuaded into it by the imperious exigency of following the war-cry of young and vaulting democracy, in order to secure his second election. Gallatin yielded to it, from a feeling of party necessity. Randolph openly and strenuously opposed it from the beginning to the end. Stephen Rowe Bradley, sixteen years a senator from Vermont, and the ablest democratic member of the Senate from New England, earnestly counseled

and hence it was urged that the war should cease, as one of its principal causes was withdrawn. Such, however, was not the view of our government.

* "That domination over public opinion which the war party so long manifested, &c., have conspired to shield Madison from the obloquy which must ever rest upon this part of his conduct—that of having been driven by intimidation, and seduced by personal interest and ambition, into a course of public conduct, in his own judgment improvident, if not highly dangerous."

"The same convictions were fully shared by Gallatin, and probably also by Monroe, the President's two principal cabinet officers."—*Hildreth's United States*, second series, vol. iii. p. 334.

Madison against it.* Fifteen democratic members of Congress voted against the Declaration of War. There was, in fact, a large body of reflecting democrats in the country who did not approve of the war, though the vehemence of those who supported it kept them in silence, or perhaps forced them to acquiescence. While such was the fact as to many leading democrats, the federalists, with one voice, united in its condemnation.

If such were the objections of New England to the war, there were others of equal force to the proposed method of carrying it on. The plan of the government was to invade Canada, conquer it, and hold it as a pledge of peace. In New England, there were objections of principle, founded as well in the Constitution, as in policy and morals, against aggressive war, especially for avowed purposes of conquest. And besides, they held that the ocean, and not the land, was the true theater upon which we were best qualified to cope with the enemy.

These, I repeat, were the views of New England, by which I mean the *people* of New England—not of a few politicians and party leaders, but of the great body of the citizens—that is, the entire federal party, constituting a large majority of the voters. It is a well-known characteristic of this part of our country, that all classes read, reflect, and form opinions. These

* General Bradley was so dissatisfied with the war, that soon after, he withdrew altogether from public life.

give direction to politicians, not politicians to them. It is important to keep this in view; it is indispensable to the formation of a just judgment upon questions which immediately ensued, and which are matters of dispute to the present day. It will be seen that even the Hartford Convention originated with the people, and was a measure of necessity, dictated by the state of public feeling and opinion, arising from the condition of the country at large, and New England in particular.

I thus present this picture of the actual state of things at the commencement of the war, not to arraign either party as wholly wrong, or to vindicate either as wholly right. It was an era of high party excitement, and in the shock, all were doubtless forced into false positions. Yet, making due allowance for these natural and pardonable obliquities, on one side and the other, and instructed by subsequent events as recorded by history, I do not hesitate to say that these opinions of the New England people had a serious and just foundation. Opposition to the war was, therefore, not only their right, but, with these convictions, it was their duty. To have submitted to the doctrine that *opposition is treason*, would have made them unworthy of the name and privileges of freemen. That their opposition was, on the whole, as moderate in spirit and wise in form, as it was just in principle, is also my firm conviction.

LETTER XXVIII.

Specks of War in the Atmosphere—The First Year—Operations on the Land and on the Sea—The Wickedness of the Federalists—The Second Year—The Connecticut Militia—Decatur driven into the Thames—Connecticut in trouble—I become a Soldier—My First and Last Campaign.

My dear C******

I am not about to write the "History of the War of 1812"—though that has not yet been done. We have abundance of books under that title, but a sober and just account, rising above the party fire and smoke of that day, and above the sinister influences of this, is yet to be written.* It is, however, a task I shall not undertake—either in these pages or elsewhere. I am writing my own recollections, and it is only as these afford glimpses of the period alluded to, that I shall notice it.

I pass over a variety of things, still in my memory: the gradual deepening of the gloom that spread over society as the events of the war drew on; the bankruptcies of merchants; the suspension of specie payments by the banks; the difficulty of getting money; the gradual withering of the resources of the people; the scarcity of a multitude of articles, alike

* Hildreth's History of the United States is a strong book—vigorous in its style and manly in its spirit. Its sketch of the war of 1812 is a mere outline, but so far as it goes it seems to me calculated to satisfy the reader who wishes to obtain an impartial and true view of events, and of the men that participated in them

of luxury, convenience, and necessity; the stagnation of trade; the impoverishment and depression of the laboring classes; the crushing of the hopes and prospects of the young, about entering upon the theater of active and independent life: in short, that general sense of anxiety, poverty, and disappointment—which clouded nearly every brow and nearly every heart. I pass over those hells of drinking, deception, and degradation, called recruiting rendezvous. I pass over the scream of fife and tuck of drum—daily exhibited in the streets by a miserable set of young men, for the most part seduced into the army, either by artifice or liquor. I pass over the patriotic pulsations of the democracy, and the lowering disgust of federalism, as the glorious army of patriots—sometimes ten or a dozen men—led by a puffy sergeant, choking with martial ardor or a close-fitting stock, passed through our city on their way to the Conquest of Canada. I pass by Col. C.....—a sample of a large part of the new army officers of that period—a raw river boatman, suddenly converted into a colonel, and strutting, with his martial cloak around him, like a new-fledged Shanghai cock. I pass by the arrival in our town of Dearborn—"Major-general Dearborn—commander-in-chief of the American army"—a great man, and causing a great sensation, then—but "Granny Dearborn" a very short time after.

Leaving these and similar incidents entirely out of view, and taking a long leap to the close of the year

—what saith the record? General Hull had surrendered in August—less than sixty days after the declaration of war—to the British at Detroit, giving up his whole army of two thousand men, with all our forts, garrisons, and territories in that quarter. This, the direct result of mismanagement on the part of the Administration, as well in planning the campaign as in giving an important command to an imbecile officer—was the substance of the first year's operations against Canada. We just caught a Tartar—that is, the Tartar took us and our territory, instead of our taking him! General Dearborn had indeed three armies afoot — some ten thousand men, stretching along the Canada line, from Plattsburg to Michigan; and there was some fighting, but nothing effectual was done. Never was a country in a situation more humiliating than ours—a great nation, having boasted of overrunning Canada in two months—seeing its own armies beaten, baffled, and retiring ingloriously into winter quarters, before an enemy which we had covered with epithets of ridicule and contempt!

The federalists were very wicked people, and putting finger to nose, as they met the democrats, they said—"We told you so!" Now, "I told you so!" is not only a very provoking, but, in general, a very mean argument. The federalists were very wrong indeed—positively unchristian. Charity tells us to comfort the unfortunate, and to pour balm into the wounded heart. The federalists did no such thing.

Oh, how the Connecticut Mirror, in the hands of Theodore Dwight, did cast its arrows, right and left, at the war and its authors! Poor "Jim Madison:" poor "Granny Dearborn!" It was indeed very, very provoking, very improper.

While thus failure and disgrace attended our operations upon the land, light broke in upon us from the ocean. On the 19th of August, three days after Hull's surrender, another Hull—the gallant Commodore—met the Guerrière, and it was ours. Again the wicked federalists said—"We told you so! that's our thunder." This was true enough. The federalists had built up the navy: Jefferson and his party had opposed it. The federalists had urged that—if we must go to war—the strength of the country should be put into ships, and that we should meet the enemy upon the sea. "Not so"—said democracy—"we will take Canada!" It was very provoking of Commodore Hull to capture the Guerrière, for it gave aid and comfort to the enemy—these black-hearted federalists! However, other commanders followed Hull's example. On the 18th of October, Capt. Jones, in the Wasp, took the British sloop-of-war Frolic; and on the 25th of the same month, the fierce and fiery Decatur, in the frigate United States, captured the British frigate Macedonian. In December, Bainbridge conquered the Java, after a fearful conflict. "Hurra for the navy: we told you so!" said the black-hearted federalists.

Such was the first year of the war: the campaign of 1813 opened upon a wider and more varied field. Among its incidents upon the land, were the disastrous operations of Winchester, at Frenchtown—which clothed all Kentucky in mourning for its gallant sons, fallen in battle; our capture of York, in Canada, costing the life of the lamented Pike; Harrison's effective resistance at the siege of Fort Meigs; the battle of the Thames, and the death of the great Indian chief, Tecumseh—important events, leading finally to the recovery of Detroit. To these were added the retirement of General Dearborn—the President insisting he was sick, while the general, not taking or not relishing the joke, insisted that he was never better in his life; the succession of Wilkinson as commander-in-chief—soon, however, to be superseded and tried by court-martial for his blunders and failures; the magnificent attempt to take Montreal, and its equally magnificent abortion; and finally, late in the year, the bloody and desolating ravages by the British, of Buffalo, Black Rock, Lewiston, &c., &c., in revenge for our burning the Canadian village of Newark, by which we turned four hundred helpless people out of doors in midwinter. Thus the year, which had presented some brilliant instances of courage and conduct, closed in general disappointment and humiliation, so far as our land operations were concerned. "We told you so!" said the wicked federalists, and many a democratic ear tingled at the gibe.

Yet light again—with some sad and disheartening shadows—came from the sea. On the 21st of February, Captain Lawrence took the Peacock, but on the 4th of June following, gave up his life on the deck of the Chesapeake—captured by the Shannon—bequeathing, however, to his country the glorious motto, worthy of all great occasions—"Don't give up the ship!" On the 14th of August the American Argus quailed to the British Pelican; in September, the British Boxer became the prize of the American Enterprise. A greater triumph was at hand. On the 10th of this month, Perry met the enemy on Lake Erie, and "they were ours!" It was indeed a glorious victory; the entire British fleet—two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop—falling into our hands.

"We told you so: that's our thunder!" said the exultant but provoking federalists. "It is our thunder, too!" said the democrats. "Hurra for the navy!" said both parties. "Here's to Hull and Decatur and Jones and Biddle and Bainbridge, and all the rest!" said everybody. There was one point of union at last, and so it was to the end of the war. The little navy had conquered democratic prejudice, and fought itself into national favor. It was indeed a glorious thing—saving the honor of the country, tarnished by imbecility and disaster upon the land, and teaching a wise lesson as to the true policy to be pursued, in case of future conflict with any European enemy: *let us meet them upon the sea!*

I must not omit an episode of the war at this period, in which I was concerned. On the first of June, 1813, Commodore Decatur, in the United States, attended by the Macedonian and the sloop-of-war Hornet, having passed from New York through the Sound, attempted to get out to sea by way of Montauk Point. Here they were met by the British fleet, under Commodore Hardy, and driven into the Thames at New London. The enemy's force was soon increased by the arrival of other ships of war, and these, anchoring off Gull Island so as to block up the port, seemed to threaten a speedy attack. Great panic immediately ensued, as well at New London as along the borders of the Sound. The specie of the banks in that city was removed to Norwich, and the women and children dispersed themselves among the interior towns and villages. No adequate means of defense existed along the line of the New England coast—seven hundred miles in extent. The regular troops had nearly all been marched off to invade Canada. The general government had, furthermore, called upon the New England States to place a portion of the militia at their disposal for this object. This had been refused on several grounds: one was, that the Constitution provided only three contingencies, in which the militia could be lawfully placed under the command of the President, and these were, *to repel invasion, suppress insurrection, and execute the laws.* Neither of these emergencies existed in the

present case. Another ground of refusal was, that the coasts, being left defenceless, the retaining of the militia was a measure dictated by every consideration of prudence. Still another objection was, that the general government had so organized and distributed the national forces, as to make the militia fall under the command of the army officers—a principle always resisted by the country, in every period of its national history. On the whole, the government scheme, in respect to the militia, was regarded, and very justly, as analogous to the systems of conscription in the military despotisms of Europe, and—if once tolerated and passed into practice—as alike hostile to our principles and threatening to our liberties. The fear of seeing our freedom fall before some ambitious military leader, had prevailed in the convention which framed our Constitution, and it was this which had induced that far-seeing body to circumscribe the power of the President, in regard to the militia, within the clear and narrow limits already mentioned. Prudence and patriotism alike dictated, in the present instance, that this great bulwark of liberty should be maintained.

These, fortunately for the country, were the views of the New England States at this period, and upon these they acted. There was then and has been since, much clamor by the war party against their conduct in this instance, but every lover of his country should render homage to the wisdom and patriotism of those

leaders who guided the councils of New England, at this crisis. The question was then settled, and doubtless settled forever, that by no artifice can the system of conscription, giving unlimited command over the militia to the President, be consummated. The rule of the Constitution, in this respect, has been confirmed, as not only a principle in theory, but as a rule of practice.

I remember the discussions on this subject which took place at the North, during this period. Besides the objections already mentioned against placing the militia at the disposal of the President—and besides the general hostility of the people to sending their sons forth for the avowed purpose of conquest—there was another motive, and a very active one, tending in the same direction. The new army officers, with some honorable exceptions, were held in very light esteem, as well personally as professionally. *Almost without exception, the appointments were bestowed upon partisans of the President.* Many of the officers were notoriously unfit for the places given to them.*

* This was certainly the case in New England, and I know of no circumstance in the whole conduct of the war, that operated so powerfully as this, to destroy the confidence of the people in the government, and to exasperate them against it. Many of the officers, especially those of the lower grade, had no qualifications for the places they filled but their democracy. This was pointed out to the President: he was advised that if he would commission certain persons of the federal party, who were conspicuous for their military qualifications, and who were also willing to receive commissions, that it would do more than any thing else to break the opposition to the war. This he declined, saying that the offices belonged of right to those who supported his administration, and besides, that he should disgust his own party by such a course.

Dearborn especially was well known in New England, and was regarded as wholly incompetent to the responsible command devolved upon him. Hull's surrender, Dearborn's failures, and Wilkinson's abortions, justified and increased this general want of confidence in the new army appointments. Even if other objections had not existed, the people would have revolted at the idea of sending their sons to perish ingloriously along the Canadian borders, under the direction of incompetent commanders, *appointed on merely partisan principles.*

But now a new state of things had arisen in Connecticut: our own territory was threatened. For this, the State government had made wise preparation, and on their part there was no hesitation.* It was midsummer—a period when the husbandmen could

* Party vehemence has represented that the New England States, at this period, not only opposed the war by words but by deeds; that in fact they were prepared to go over to the enemy. Nothing could be more untrue. Whatever might be the political opinions of the federalists, when the war was declared, Great Britain was regarded as an enemy. I can affirm, that, although I was in the very midst of the "old federalists" of Connecticut, I never heard a word fall from the lips of any one of them, expressive of an opposite sentiment. I no doubt caught the feelings of those around me, and I am conscious of having always felt, through the war, that the British were our national enemies. The records of Connecticut prove, conclusively, that this idea was as strongly entertained by the government of that State as by the general government itself. The following are extracts from the doings of the legislature, in their extra session, called in August, 1813, in consequence of the declaration of war; and the conduct of the State was in accordance with these views.

"War, always calamitous, in this case portentous of great evils, enacted against a nation powerful in her armies, and without a rival on the ocean, can not be viewed by us but with the deepest regret. A nation

ill afford to leave their farms: so orders were sent by Governor Smith* to dispatch at once the companies of militia from the larger towns to the defense of New London, and the neighboring country. At that time I belonged to an artillery company, and this was among those ordered to the coast. I received a summons at four o'clock in the afternoon, to be ready to march the next day at sunrise. I went at once to consult

without fleets, without armies, with an impoverished treasury, with a frontier by sea and land extending many hundred miles, feebly defended—waging a war, hath not first 'counted the cost.'

"By the Constitution of the United States, the power of declaring war is vested in Congress. They have declared war against Great Britain. However much this measure is regretted, the General Assembly, ever regardful of their duty to the general government, will perform all those obligations resulting from this act. With this view, they have at this session provided for the more effectual organization of the military force of the State, and a supply of the munitions of war. These will be employed, should the public exigencies require it, in defense of this State, and of our sister States, in compliance with the Constitution; and it is not to be doubted, but that the citizens of this State will be found, at the constitutional call of their country, among the foremost in its defense."

* Roger Griswold was Governor at the time the war was declared, but in October, 1812, during the session of the legislature, he died at his residence in Norwich. John Cotton Smith, then Lieutenant-governor, became acting governor, and the next April was elected Governor of the State. Roger Griswold was born at Lyme in 1762: having graduated at Yale College, he devoted himself to the law, and soon rose to eminence. In 1794 he was elected to Congress, where he continued for many years, being a leader of the federal party. Mr. Webster once told me that he considered him one of the most accomplished parliamentary debaters our country has produced. During his time there was an Irishman in Congress from Vermont, named Matthew Lyon, of whom the poet Honeywood thus sings:

"I'm rugged Mat,
The Democrat—
Berate me as you please, sir:
True Paddy-whack,
Ne'er turn'd his back,
Nor bow'd his head to Cæsar."

my uncle—who, by the way, was at that time not only mayor of the city, but Lieutenant-governor of the State. He had a short time before promised to make me one of his aids, and perhaps thought I should expect him now to fulfill his engagement. He soon set that matter at rest.

"You must of course go," said he. "We old federalists can not shelter our nephews, when there is a question of defending our own territory."

"Ought I not to consult my parents?" said I.

I will go down and see them to-morrow," he replied.

"Certainly then I shall go: I wish to go: my only feeling is that my mother may have some anxiety."

"I will see her to-morrow: you may be at ease on that subject. Be ready to march at sunrise, according to your orders. I will come and see you before you start."

The next morning, while it was yet dark, he came, gave me letters of introduction to Judge Brainard, father of the poet, Judge Perkins, and General Williams. He also supplied me with ten dollars, a welcome addition to my light purse. After a little advice, he said—"I have only one thing to add—if you come to a fight, *don't run away till the rest do.* Good-by!"

This man, one day, spit in Griswold's face in the Representatives' Hall, and as the democratic majority refused to punish him, Griswold gave him a severe beating with his cane. This was the first of those indecent brawls which have disgraced our national assembly.

The next morning—June 7, 1813—about sunrise, the whole company, nearly sixty in number, mounted in wagons, departed. At sunset, we were on the heights, two miles back of New London. No provision had been made for us, and so we went supperless to bed, in a large empty barn. I scarcely closed my eyes, partly because it was my first experiment in sleeping on the floor, and partly because of the terrific snoring of a fellow-soldier, by the name of C . . . ., who chanced to be at my side. Never have I heard such a succession of choking, suffocating, strangling sounds as issued from his throat. I expected that he would die, and indeed once or twice I thought he was dead. Strange to say, he got up the next morning in excellent condition, and seemed, indeed, to feel better for the exercise. This man became quite a character before the campaign was over: he got the title of Æolus, and as he could not be tolerated in the barracks, he was provided with a tent, at a good distance, where he blew his blast without restraint. I need only add, that, at the close of the campaign, he was the fattest man in the company.

I was glad to see the daylight. The weather was fine, and as the sun came up, we saw the British fleet —some half dozen large ships of war—lying off the mouth of the Thames. They seemed very near at hand, and for the first time I realized my situation—that of a soldier, who was likely soon to be engaged in battle. I said nothing of my emotions: indeed,

words were unnecessary. I watched the countenances of my companions as they first caught a view of the black and portentous squadron, and I read in almost every bosom a reflection of my own feelings. We were, however, not all sentimentalists. There were among us, as doubtless in all such companies, a supply of witty, reckless Gallios, who gave a cheerful turn to our thoughts. We soon dispersed among the inhabitants, scattered over the neighboring hills and valleys, for breakfast. Like hungry wolves, we fell upon the lean larders, and left famine behind. Of course every one offered to pay, but not one person would accept a farthing: we were, indeed, received as protectors and deliverers. It was something, after all, to be soldiers! With our stomachs fortified, and our consciousness flattered, we came cheerfully together.

At ten o'clock, we were mustered, and began our march, all in our best trim: cocked hats, long-tailed blue coats, with red facings, white pantaloons, and shining cutlasses at our sides. Our glittering cannon moved along with the solemnity of elephants. It was, in fact, a fine company—all young men, and many from the best families in Hartford. Our captain, Johnson, was an eminent lawyer, of martial appearance, and great taste for military affairs. He afterward rose to the rank of general. Mosely, the first-lieutenant, was six feet four inches high—a young lawyer, nephew of Oliver Wolcott—and of high social

and professional standing. Screamed the fife, rolled the drum—as we entered New London! The streets presented some confusion, for still the people were removing back into the country, as an attack was daily expected. A few military companies were also gathering into the town. We were, however, not wholly overlooked: women put their heads out of the windows, and smiled their gratitude as we passed along. Men stopped, and surveyed us with evident signs of approbation. Louder screamed our fife, deeper rolled our drum, and the glorious music echoed and re-echoed—bounded and rebounded—from the reverberating walls of the streets. It was a glorious thing to belong to such a company! At last we came to a halt in one of the public squares. Then there was racing and chasing of aid-de-camps, in buff and feathers, for four mortal hours, during which our martial pride wilted a little in the broiling sun. At four o'clock in the afternoon, we were transported across the Thames, to the village of Groton, and took up our quarters in a large house, on the bank of the river, vacated for our use. Two immense kettles—the one filled with junks of salt beef and the other with unwashed potatoes—were swung upon the kitchen trammels, and at six o'clock in the evening we were permitted each to fish out his dinner from the seething mass. That was my first soldier's supper; and after all, it was a welcome and relishing meal.

LETTER XXIX.

Description of New London—Fort Trumbull—Fort Griswold—The British Fleet—Decatur and his Ships in the Thames—Commodore Hardy—Letters from Home—Performances of the Hartford Company—Fishing—A few British Broadsides—Apprehensions of an Attack—Great Preparations—Sober Second Thoughts—On Guard—A Suspicious Customer—Alarm, alarm!—Company called out—Expectations of instant Battle—Corporal T.'s Nightmare—Consequences—Influence of Camp Life—Return to Hartford—Land Warrants—Blue Lights—Decatur, Biddle, and Jones.

My dear C******

I must attempt to give you an idea of our position, as now established in our barracks. New London, as you doubtless know, is situated on the western bank of the River Thames, three miles from its mouth. It has now ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, but at the time I am speaking of, there were not more than four thousand. The entrance to the river is broad, and affords a fine harbor. This is defended by Fort Trumbull on the western side of the river, half a mile below the city. It was commanded, at two several periods, by my grandfather, Colonel Ely,* during the Revolutionary war, but was then a place of little strength. It fell into disrepair, but had been

* "Dr. John Ely, of Lyme (1776), performed a tour of duty here as captain and major, and also as physician and surgeon. In July he was sent to visit the northern army, and employ his skill in arresting the small-pox, which was then raging in the camp with great virulence."—*Caulkin's History of New London*, p. 521. Colonels Latimer, Ely, &c., performed tours of duty, with their respective regiments, at New London and Groton, 1777.—*Ibid.* p. 526.

rebuilt, and contained a garrison of six or seven hundred soldiers during the war of 1812. It has recently been reconstructed on an ample scale, and is at present one of the most complete of our fortifications, mounting eighty heavy guns, and having accommodations for eight hundred men.

Opposite to New London is the village of Groton, the main street running along the river bank; on an eminence some hundred rods from the river, and commanding a view of the surrounding country, including the harbor and the islands which lie scattered near it in the Sound, is the site of Fort Griswold—the scene of one of the saddest tragedies in our revolutionary annals. Here is now a monument one hundred and thirty feet in height, erected by the State, in commemoration of this event. The old fort is, however, in ruins, though a small attached battery, lower down, and more suited to effective defense of the harbor, has been rebuilt. In my time, Fort Griswold was in tolerable repair. Our company, as well as other portions of the militia, labored upon it, and strengthened it, as well by completing its works as by erecting a small redoubt upon the southeastern side. To the defense of the latter, in case of attack, the Hartford company was assigned.

About a week after our arrival, over a thousand militia, gathered from various parts of the State, were stationed along the river, chiefly on the eastern bank. Decatur had drawn his three ships up the stream as

far as possible, some twelve miles from its mouth, and near the city of Norwich. Here the river is reduced to three hundred feet in width, and flows between high rocky banks. On one of these, called Allyn's Mountain—commanding a wide view even as far south as the harbor—light intrenchments were thrown up, being deemed an effectual defense against any attack likely to be made by the enemy.

The British squadron had been for some time on the coast. As early as April, Commodore Hardy, in the flag-ship Ramiles, with the Orpheus and other vessels, having erected their standard on Block Island, cruised in this quarter. The people of New London, who had hitherto remained sheltered from the war, were now suddenly reminded of the British fleet which came hither under the vindictive Arnold*

* Long Island Sound, and its shores on both sides, were the scenes of active and stirring events during the Revolutionary war. This sheet of water, as well as Long Island itself, and the city of New York at its western extremity, were for a long time in the possession of the enemy. Large British fleets were often seen sweeping through the Sound, and always carried terror into the towns and villages of Connecticut along the northern shore. On the 5th of September, 1781, a fleet of thirty-two vessels, of all classes, conveyed to New London a force of about two thousand men. These were landed the next day, and marched upon the town. All was panic and confusion among the inhabitants. Colonel Ledyard, with such means as could be mustered, took his station at Fort Griswold. A force of twenty-three men at Fort Trumbull—which was only a battery for defense toward the water, and open behind—on the approach of the enemy, fired a volley, and crossed the river to Fort Griswold. Arnold, amid random shots which did some execution, entered the town. The work of destruction then commenced. The torch was applied, and a long line of fire soon enveloped the place. Shops, stores, houses, vessels, wharves, boats, rigging, were enveloped in smoke and flame. Hogsheads of sugar and rum, and tubs of butter were knocked in, and the flames, seizing upon the alcohol and grease, ran

thirty years before, and left behind him an imperishable remembrance of outrage and infamy.

The British commander, Hardy, conducted with the utmost courtesy and humanity, but still there was a feeling of uneasiness along the shore. This was deepened into anxiety and alarm, on the arrival of Decatur and his ships, and the consequent gathering of the British forces around the harbor, as if for at-

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in rivers of fire along the gutters of the streets. Arnold was born near this place, and was well acquainted with it. He used his information to effect the destruction of the best parts of the city, and nearly all its stores of merchandise, &c.

On the other side of the river a deeper tragedy was being enacted. Colonel Eyre had been dispatched against Fort Griswold with two British regiments. The fort itself was an oblong square, with bastions at opposite angles—its long side fronting the river. Its defenders, under Colonel Ledyard, were but one hundred and fifty men. About noon the enemy made their attack in solid column. They were at first received with a few deadly volleys, and then by a quick, steady, destructive fire. Both attack and defense were firm and determined. The men within seemed each a hero. The two British commanders fell. But the enemy at last conquered by numbers. They marched in, and Col. Ledyard ordered his men to throw down their arms. A few, however, in one of the bastions still resisted. This irritated the British, and they continued their deadly fire from the parapets, even upon the surrendered Americans.

At last, the British major, Bromfield, on whom the command had devolved, entered, and demanded, "Who commands this fort?" "I did," said Col. Ledyard, "but you do now." At the same time, he presented his sword, in token of submission. The ferocious commander took the weapon and plunged it in the owner's bosom! At the same moment the attendants rushed upon the prostrate and bleeding victim, and dispatched him with their bayonets. The work of butchery then went on against the survivors. At last the enemy departed, leaving eighty-five Americans dead, and about thirty-five regarded as mortally wounded—having first stripped them, and then leaving them exposed to the broiling sun. More than half this butchery took place after the surrender. A small number, who survived, were taken away as prisoners.

Such was the desolating expedition of the traitor, Benedict Arnold,

tack. When we arrived, the squadron consisted, I think, of two ships-of-the-line, two frigates, and a number of smaller vessels. There was, however, a constant movement among them—the force being frequently diminished, and as frequently augmented. These changes were the occasion of constant alarm along the shore, and scarcely a day passed that we had not some rumor of a meditated attack.

Such was the state of public affairs on the surface. As to myself, I was soon drilled into the habits of a soldier. I had been permitted to go to New London and deliver my letters of introduction. I received letters from home, and in one of these, from my father, which I have preserved, I find the following passages:

"We hope you will pay very exact attention to your conduct and behavior, while you are a soldier. You have our prayers for your welfare and that of your comrades. Study to ingratiate yourself with them, by your kindness, and especially with your officers, by your cheerful obedience to their orders. We

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against New London. It adds to the horror, inspired by such details, to know that he was accompanied by a large number of Americans, who, however, had joined the British, and thus came to aid in the work of death, ruin, and despair. Such is war. The next day, the ships, having received the troops, departed, leaving a dreadful scene of havoc and desolation behind them. New London was, indeed, little better than a ruin.

The memory of this event, and the natural hatred consequently inspired by the British name, still lives here and in the neighborhood. The anniversary of the massacre at Groton fort was long celebrated with sad solemnities. A lofty monument now points to heaven, in protest against the crime it records. Such deeds never die, and the world is dotted all over with them—too many perpetrated by men who bore the British name. Is this the explanation of the general dislike of Great Britain, throughout the civilized world?

hear that there is an additional British force arrived within a few days. How long they will think it worth while to keep up the blockade at New London, is uncertain: they will not, at any rate, consult our convenience. We are in hopes the British will make no attack upon New London, and that you will not be called into a conflict with them. But we must leave this to the overruling of a merciful God, as also the issue, should he permit such an event. Should you be called to engage with them, I hope and trust that you will do your duty, and defend your country, which is just and right, though it may not be so to engage in offensive war.

"I wish to remind you, my dear son, of the necessity of being prepared for death, at all times and by all persons. This is specially important to a soldier. This will arm you with courage to meet whatever God shall call you to experience. It is no evidence of courage for persons to rush into danger in a thoughtless or wicked manner; it is a better and surer courage which rests upon a deep sense of duty, and which always keeps the soldier ready to die at any moment—even at the beat of the drum."

There, my dear C...., is a specimen of old Presbyterian, Blue Light, Hartford Convention Federalism, during the "late war!" It was good doctrine then, and it is good doctrine now: good to live by, and good to die by. At all events, as this letter came from home, and told me of the welfare of my friends; as it came also with a large bundle of tea, sugar, dried beef, and other things, with several pairs of stockings, mended up by my mother, and abundance of messages and good wishes, and sundry letters and scraps of letters—it put me in good heart, whether for peace or war. Who would not be a soldier, if

thereby he becomes the object of such sympathy? Fortified by this aid and comfort,* I could cheerfully have gone to fight the British, or anybody else - "where duty called me."

The officers of our company were rigid disciplinarians, and accordingly we were drilled for about four hours each day. We soon gained much reputation for our martial exercises and our tidy appearance. Many people came over from New London to witness our performances. Among these were often persons of distinction. On two occasions, Decatur, Biddle, and Jones came to see us, and complimented us very heartily. On Sundays, we marched two miles to church. Being in our best guise, we caused quite a sensation. Men and women, boys and girls, streamed along at our flanks, often in a broiling sun, yet always with admiring looks.

After the morning drill, we were generally at leisure for the rest of the day, taking our turns, however, on guard, and in other occasional duties. Most

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* Among the letters alluded to, was the following:

HARTFORD, June 12, 1813.

MY DEAR SAMUEL:

I had the pleasure to receive yesterday your letter by Mr. Whiting. I am happy to be informed of your health, and that you have the good fare of a soldier: whatever it may want of the delicacies of the luxurious table of the citizen, will be made up to you in the zest you will have when you return to it. The principal thing you have to attend to is the care of your health, and that also you will best learn, as we do every thing, by experience. Your father will be here to-day. We are all well. Write by every opportunity.

Your affectionate uncle, CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.

of the soldiers gave up their rations of mess beef and potatoes, and lived on their own resources. We formed ourselves into a general club for a supply of fresh fish. Every day three of us went out fishing, and generally returned with a half-bushel basketful of various kinds, among which the blackfish or tautaug—now so greatly esteemed—was always abundant. I was employed by the captain to keep his journal of our proceedings, and sometimes I was dispatched to New London, or to some one of the officers along the line, with a letter or a parcel. I established a friendly acquaintance with old Mrs. Avery, who kept a supply of excellent bread and butter, milk and eggs. I visited Fort Trumbull, and the blockaded fleet up the river. Frequently I strolled into the country, and now and then went to see "Mrs. Bailey," who even at that early period was a celebrity of Groton. I have never seen such fierce democracy as in this village, fed, as it doubtless is, upon the remembrance of the British massacre at the fort; and Mrs. Bailey was filled with its most peppery essence. The story of the flannel petticoat* was then

* When Decatur took refuge in New London harbor, the inhabitants of Groton were thrown into great alarm. At this moment a messenger was sent to Fort Griswold for flannel, to be used for the cannon. Most of the portable goods had been sent away, and the messenger was unsuccessful, until he met Mrs. Anna Bailey, who instantly took off her flannel petticoat and heartily devoted it to the patriotic cause of defense. It was carried to the fortress, and displayed on a pike. The story being told, the garrison cheered, and the "martial petticoat" became almost as celebrated as Mahomet's breeches. The story went over the whole

recent, but it had marked her for immortality. All the soldiers went to see her, and she sang Jefferson and Liberty to them with great spirit. Once a soldier talked "old federalism" to her, by way of jest: whereupon she got up, and holding out her petticoat, danced and sang Jefferson and Liberty at him, as if that were sufficient to strike him dead.

I remember that on one occasion H.... A..., my special companion, and myself, were sent with a letter to a lieutenant, who commanded a small picket on the eastern shore, near the mouth of the river—that is, at Point Groton. It was a distance of some three miles. The weather was pleasant, and our route lay along the shore of the stream, which opens into a wide bay, as it meets the Sound. As we approached the southern point of the shore, we found ourselves quite near to the British squadron. One of the vessels, which we knew as the Acasta*—for we had learned all their names—was under full sail in a light wind, and coming up toward the shore. She was already so near that we could see the men, and note every movement on the deck. While we were admiring the beautiful appearance of the ship, we suddenly saw several white puffs issue from her sides,

country, and when General Jackson (then President) came to New London, he visited this lady. She is said to have given him a very demonstrative reception. She died January 10, 1851, aged 92 years.

* This ship was noted for her beauty: she was in fact the belle of the fleet, and was said to have been built for the Duke of Clarence, who served in the navy till he became admiral, and was afterward King of England, under the title of William IV.

and uncoil themselves into volumes of smoke. Then came a deafening roar; a moment after, and in the very midst of it, there were wild howls in the air, above our heads. At a little distance beyond, the ground was plowed up, scattering the soil around, and the top of one of the forest trees, of which a few were scattered here and there, was cut asunder, and fell almost at our feet.

We understood the joke in an instant, and so did the lieutenant who commanded the picket. He was the object of the attack, and the broadside of the Acasta, sending its shot over our heads, had hurled one or two balls crashing through the roof of the little fish-hut, which he and his men occupied. In less than five minutes, they were seen trotting off at a round pace, with their cannon, jerking right and left, over the rough ground behind them. Several other shots were given, but the party escaped in safety. My companion and myself ensconced ourselves behind the rocks, and though it was grave sport, we enjoyed it exceedingly. We could trace the cannon-balls as they flew by looking like globes of mist, twinkling through the air. Several of them passed close over our heads, and grooved the earth, in long trenches, at our sides. The noise they made, as they rose high in the air, was a strange mixture, between a howl and a scream. After having thus showed her teeth, and made a great noise, the frigate returned to her anchorage, and all was quiet. I hope I shall not de-

grade myself, as a soldier, in your eyes, by confessing that this was the only battle in which I was engaged during this glorious war!

I must, however, mention one circumstance, which tried the souls of our company. Let me premise that, on a certain Saturday, a large accession to the British force arrived in the bay, the whole number of vessels, of all kinds, amounting to fourteen. This looked very much like an attack, and accordingly there was a feverish anxiety among the inhabitants of New London and the vicinity, and a general bustle in the army, from Groton Point to Allyn's Mountain. A large body of militia was set to work upon Fort Griswold. Our company was drilled in the little redoubt which we were to defend, and every preparation was made to give the enemy a warm reception. The general idea was, that a landing of British troops would be made on the eastern side, and that we should take the brunt of the first attack.

The sun set in clouds, and as the evening advanced, bursts of thunder, attended by flashes of lightning, muttered along the distant horizon. Our company were admonished to sleep on their arms. Every thing wore a rather ominous appearance. There were no signs of cowardice in the men, but they looked thoughtful; and when Bill W...., the laureate wit of the company, let off some of his best jokes—which would ordinarily have set the whole corps in a roar—he was answered by a dead silence. It chanced

that I was that night on guard. My turn came at ten o'clock. Taking my gun, I paced the bank of the river, back and forth, in front of our barracks. I had received orders to let nothing pass, by land or water. It was intensely dark, but at frequent intervals, thin flashes of lightning sprang up against the distant sky, behind dark rolling masses of clouds.

Gradually the lights in the streets and windows of New London, stretching in a long line on the opposite side of the river, were extinguished one by one, a few remaining, however, as sentinels, indicating anxiety and watchfulness. The sounds on all sides were at last hushed, and left the world to darkness and to me. More than half of my two-hours' watch had passed, when I heard the dip of oars and the flapping of waves against the prow of a boat. I looked in the direction of the sounds, and at last descried the dusky outline of a small craft, stealing down the river. I cried out—"Boat ahoy! who goes there?" My voice echoed portentously in the silence, but no answer was given, and the low, black, raking apparition glided on its way. Again I challenged, but there was still no reply. On went the ghost! I cocked my gun. The click sounded ominously on the still night air. I began to consider the horror of shooting some fellow-being in the dark. I called a third time, and not without avail. The rudder was turned, the boat whirled on her heel, and a man came ashore. According to my orders, I marshaled him to the guard-

room, and gave notice of what had happened, to the captain. The man was only a fisherman, going home, but he was detained till morning. So, you see, I can boast that I made one prisoner. My watch was soon over, and returning to my station, I laid down to sleep.

All was soon quiet, and I was buried in profound repose, when suddenly there was a cry in the main barrack-room, overhead—"Alarm! alarm!"

"Alarm! alarm!" was echoed by twenty voices, attended by quick, shuffling sounds, and followed by a hurried rush of men down the staircase. A moment after, the guard in front discharged his musket, and was answered by a long line of reports, up and down the river, from the various sentinels extending for half a dozen miles. Then came the roll of drums, and the mustering of the men. Several of our company had been out to see what was going on: they came back, saying that the enemy was approaching! J. M.... distinctly heard the roar of cannon, and positively saw the flashes of muskets. B. W.... found out that the attack had already begun upon our southern pickets. Nobody doubted that our time had come!

In a very few minutes our company was drawn up in line, and the roll was called. It was still dark, but the faint flashes gave us now and then a glimpse of each other's faces. I think we were a ghostly looking set, but it was perhaps owing to the bluish complexion of the light. J. S...., of West Hartford, who

marched at my left shoulder—usually the lightest-hearted fellow in the company—whispered to me, "Goodrich, I'd give fifty dollars to be at West Division!" For myself, I felt rather serious, and asked a certain anxious feeling in my stomach—"What's to be done?" I thought of my father's letter, and my uncle's injunctions, and having settled it in my mind that I must fight, I closed my thoughts against all consequences, and felt that I was ready for the conflict. I was indeed almost anxious to have it come, as the suspense was painful. I afterward found, on conversing with several members of the company, that very similar trains of thought had occurred to them. Johnson, our captain, was a man of nerve and ready speech. When the roll was finished, he said in a clear, hearty tone, "All right, my good fellows! Every man at his post!" These few words—which were, however, more politic than true, for one fellow was taken with sudden colic, and could not be got out—were electrical. We were ready to take our places in the redoubt.

Messengers were now sent to the two neighboring posts to inquire into the state of facts. Word was brought that the first alarm came from our barracks! The matter was inquired into, and it turned out that the whole affair was originated by our Corporal T...., who, in a fit of nightmare, jumped up and cried, "Alarm! alarm!"

Our martial ardor soon reconciled itself to this rather ludicrous denouement, though several persons,

who had been somewhat chapfallen, became suddenly inflated with courage, which signalized itself with outbursts of—"D—— the British!" "They're a pack of sneaking cowards, after all!" and the like. The next morning was fresh and fair. The skirmishing thunder-gusts of the night had cleared the air, and even distant objects seemed near at hand. Before us lay the whole British fleet, still and harmless, in the glassy bay. My left-hand chum, J. S...., who, in the dark hour, would have given fifty dollars to be at West Division, was now himself again. "Come on here, you black old Ramiles!" said he—dashing the doubled fist of his right hand into the palm of his left: "come on here, you black-hearted British bull-dogs, and we'll do your business for you!" &c.

Notwithstanding our military duties, you will readily comprehend that we had a good deal of leisure. For the most part, this idle time was wasted, or worse than wasted. The atmosphere of a camp presents a fearful ordeal for all, but more especially for the young soldier. The restraints of society being withdrawn, the seducing and corrupting influences which naturally spring up and riot in such a soil, too often lead captive the strong as well as the weak. The military spirit is opposed to reflection: it is reckless, banishes thought, and teaches a kind of self-abandonment. Our officers set an excellent example, and there was less of degradation in our company than in others. Still, among us, there was a general reading

of bad books, a great deal of petty gambling, and not a little tippling. It was easy to see, week by week, the gradual wearing away of the sense of propriety, of gentlemanly tastes, and general conservatism, in at least one-half the young men of our company. A similar declension was visible throughout the whole body of militia along the line. My own conviction was and is, that military life is exceedingly degrading, and especially to militia, who are suddenly called away from the usual safeguards of virtue, and exposed to new and unexpected seductions.

Fortunately our period of service was brief. In about six weeks from the time of our departure, we were dismissed, and returned to our homes. Thus closed my military career, so far as relates to active service. The remembrances of my first and last campaign are, on the whole, pleasant. There were feelings of fraternity established between the members of the company which have continued to this day, save only in regard to those which the grave has sundered. My country has not been unmindful of my services; for I have received two land-warrants—giving me a title to some hundred and sixty acres—with the fresh virgin soil of the Far West upon them. Say not that republics are ungrateful!

A few words more, and this chapter is done. You have doubtless heard about the "Connecticut Blue Lights," and of course conceive the term to imply some ignominious stain upon the reputation of this,

the "land of steady habits." You will expect me, therefore, to tell you the story of its origin.

The preceding pages have shown you that Decatur, commanding the American frigate United States, after a brief and glorious career upon the ocean, subsequent to the declaration of war, had been driven into the Thames with his prize, the Macedonian, and the sloop-of-war Hornet. Here they were all cooped up, like strong men bound hand and foot. You can readily imagine the effect of such a situation upon a person like Decatur. He was—as all the world knows—of an ardent and impetuous temperament—impulsive, impatient, irascible. No man was ever less qualified to endure the protracted and inglorious idleness of his present position. He was high-hearted, patriotic, proud of the navy: he was ambitious, and panted for glory. His bleeding country needed his services: his fellow-officers of the navy were lighting the face of the ocean in both hemispheres with their brilliant exploits. He was imprisoned, and with him three noble ships. How then must he have panted to be free!

I have told you that I saw him on several occasions. He was rather below the middle size, but of a remarkably compact and symmetrical form. He was broad-shouldered, full-chested, thin in the flank: his eye was black, piercing, and lit with a spark of fire. His nose was thin, and slightly hooked: his lips were firm, his chin small, but smartly developed. His

whole face was long and bony; his complexion swarthy; his hair jet black, and twisted in ropy curls down his forehead and over his ears. Altogether he was a remarkable looking man, and riveted the attention of every one who saw him. By the side of the quiet, thoughtful Jones, and the dark, handsome, complacent Biddle—his fellow-prisoners—he seemed like a caged eagle, ready to rend in atoms the bars which restrained him.

Decatur did not conceal his impatience: his ill-humor rendered him unjust. He was not chary in his speech, and in fact he made himself many enemies by the freedom and vehemence with which he expressed his political opinions. Certainly he and the citizens of New London were heartily tired of each other. The latter were indeed most anxious to get rid of him and his squadron, inasmuch as their presence in the Thames brought upon the inhabitants all the dangers, anxieties, and miseries of war.

That Decatur should desire to escape, and that he should have the co-operation of all the people of New London, heart and hand, would seem to be matters of course. At last he resolved to make the attempt. In October he began, gently and quietly, to drop down the river, and by the last of November was in the harbor of New London. On the night of the 12th of December all things were prepared, and the vessels were about to depart, in the hope of eluding the blockading squadron in the darkness.

Now note the ominous fact: at different times, from eight to ten o'clock in the evening, blue lights were thrown up, apparently from the land, along the shore, and on both sides of the river. Decatur assumed, at once, that these were signals, sent up by traitorous Americans, announcing to the enemy his intended departure. So positive was the conclusion, that he totally suspended his operations, and from that time made no further efforts to escape. He wrote a letter, giving an account of the affair, and did not scruple to charge the assumed treason upon the people of New London! That letter—unjust, untrue, and absurd as it was—passed into the history of the time, and party rancor, seizing upon the slander, has continued to use it to the present day. *Blue Lights*, meaning treason on the part of Connecticut federalism during the war, is a standard word in the flash dictionary of low democracy.

Now, let me make one or two suggestions. Be it remembered, that, from the beginning, Decatur was mainly indebted to the federalists of Connecticut for protection: the general government had no force sufficient to keep the enemy at bay, when he sought shelter in the Thames. His presence there brought expense, anxiety, gloom, upon the State. It involved the people of New London in every species of vexation, disquietude, and danger. How absurd, then—how contrary to all logic—to accuse them, or any of them, of attempting to prevent his departure, which,

above all things, was what they desired! Nothing but the obliquity of a mind diseased by disappointment, can excuse such a charge, made in the face of such plain and palpable contradiction.

But what were these blue lights? Now you must understand that I had left New London in July, and these events occurred in December. Yet while I was there, blue lights, and indeed lights of various other colors, were often seen, apparently along the shore; and it was generally understood that these were signals thrown up from the British ships, or perhaps from parties of the enemy cruising in boats among the islands, or going ashore on the main land. It was impossible, in most cases, to determine whether these came from the land or the water:* at all events,

* This fact has recently been recalled to my mind by the venerable Dr. S. H. P. Lee, now in full practice at New York, at the age of eighty-four! His house in New London commanded a view of the harbor and the shipping. He frequently saw blue lights all along the shore, and confirms the fact that it could not be determined, in most cases, whether they came from the sea or the land. They were always attributed to the British. He conceives that the charge of treason, on the part of Decatur, was entirely untrue and in fact absurd.

Dr. Lee informs me, that from their position, the British had no difficulty in knowing every thing that was going on along the shore. There was no rigid police: the British sailors often went ashore among the fishermen, as well on the islands as the main land: the officers not unfrequently went in disguise to New York, and even into the interior. After the peace, a ball was given to Admiral Hotham—then commander of the station—and his officers, at New London. Dr. Lee and his two sons there recognized, among the British officers, two persons, who, during the war, were passing along the street, and at his invitation stepped up into his piazza and took a look at the squadron! Of course every movement of Decatur's was known to the enemy, and as he lay in New London harbor, he was under the eye of their telescopes. They no doubt penetrated his designs, and seeing him about to make an effort to escape, sent

they were very common. They were always attributed to the British, and excited no particular interest. They were regarded only as telegraphs of the enemy, which, in general, they and they only could read.

Now, there is not one particle of evidence that these blue lights, seen by Decatur, were in any respect different from the others, familiar to everybody living in New London. They were never traced, even by suspicion, to any individual. There is no proof that they came from the land; and even if they did, they might still have come from British parties ashore. Or, if they were the work of traitors—Americans—these were isolated individuals, and their conduct would have been held in abhorrence by the whole people. To charge it, then, upon the inhabitants of New London—to attempt thus to stain the character of a city, and indirectly a whole State—was one of those acts which should have excited the indignation of every honorable mind.

I need only add, that I have never met an individual, living in New London at the time, who did not consider this imputation as absurd in itself, and

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up their blue-light telegraphs to direct the various ships to be upon the alert. While such an interpretation is probable, to say the least, it is bad logic to impute treason, and at the same time the most absurd acts of contradiction to their own interests, to the people of New London.

I give this testimony of Dr. Lee with the more readiness, as he is historically known for his courageous and beneficent professional conduct, in braving, alone, the horrors of the yellow fever at New London in 1799—when every other physician, not prostrated by the disease, had fled from it in terror. Surely such evidence should be conclusive.

as having no foundation, except in the warped and excited imagination of Decatur. I believe every member of the Hartford company — and they had good opportunity to judge of the matter—regarded it in this light. It was a wrong act on his part, and those who desire to cherish his fame—which after all is one of the glories of our country—should admit that it was an error, and do what they may to repair it. Those who seek to make the scandal live, only perpetuate the memory of the injustice which originated it.*

* Stephen Decatur was born on the eastern shore of Maryland, Jan. 5, 1779. In 1798, he entered the navy as midshipman: twice he proceeded to the Mediterranean, and in February, 1804, he recaptured and burnt the American frigate Philadelphia, in the harbor of Tripoli, then in the hands of the enemy. This exploit has always been regarded as one of the most successful acts of skill and daring on record. In an attack on Tripoli, the following August, he captured two of the enemy's vessels, performing feats of personal courage and strength, the story of which reminds us of the fabled achievements of knight-errantry. His praise was on the tongue of all his countrymen. He superseded Commodore Barron, in the command of the Chesapeake, after the shameful attack of the Leopard upon that vessel; he then became commander of the frigate United States, and in October, 1812, captured the Macedonian, as elsewhere stated. His squadron remained at New London till the close of the war, but he was appointed to the command of the President. On attempting to get to sea, in January, 1815, he was captured by two British vessels, and carried into Bermuda. In February, the war being over, he returned to the United States. Being dispatched with a squadron to the Mediterranean, he soon chastised the Algerines, and compelled them (June, 1815) to sign a treaty, abandoning their piracies, and liberating those of our countrymen whom they held in captivity. He was made one of the Navy Commissioners in November, and took up his residence at Washington. In 1819, he had a long correspondence with Commodore Barron, which issued in a challenge by the latter. The meeting took place at Bladensburgh, March 22, 1820. At the first fire Decatur was wounded, and being carried to his house, died that night in the presence of his distracted wife. Deep emotions of admira-

LETTER XXX.

Continuation of the War—The Creeks subdued—Battles of Chippewa and Bridgewater—Capture of Washington—Bladensburg Races—Humiliation of the President—Defense of Baltimore—The Star-spangled Banner—Ravages of the Coast by the British Fleet—Downfall of Napoleon—Scarcity of Money—Rag Money—Bankruptcy of the National Treasury—The Specie Bank-note, or Mr. Sharp and Mr. Sharper—Scarcity and exorbitant Prices of British Goods—Depression of all Kinds of Business—My Pocket-book Factory—Naval and Land Battle at Plattsburg—Universal Gloom—State of New England—Anxiety of the Administration—Their Instructions to the Peace Commissioners—Battle of New Orleans—Peace—Illuminations and Rejoicings.

My dear C******

I must lay aside, for the present, my own personal history, that I may complete this hasty sketch of the war. I now approach the last year—that of 1814—which happily closed the inglorious struggle.

Merely noticing important events, I remark that the Creek war, conducted on our part by General Jackson, and ending in a complete humiliation of the savages, early in this year—however it abounded in striking incidents—made little immediate impression upon us at the North, partly because the theater of operations was remote, and partly because it was over-

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tion for his character, and horror at the folly of the last act of his life, pervaded the whole community.

Commodore Jacob Jones was born in Delaware, 1770. After a brilliant professional career, he died at Philadelphia, August, 1850.

Commodore James Biddle was born at Philadelphia, 1783. He distinguished himself as a commander, and also in some diplomatic services in Turkey and China. He died in 1848.

shadowed by the more important struggle with Great Britain. The battles of Chippewa and Bridgewater, in July, displaying gallant deeds on the part of our troops—officers as well as men—everywhere excited lively demonstrations of sympathy. I think the success of our arms was always cheered, even by the federalists—the feeling of national pride, and the real hostility to Great Britain, triumphing over party feeling.

When the news came that—August 24th—the city of Washington had been invaded, captured, desolated—the President and his cabinet having actually fled like a flock of sheep—there was a deep, burning sense of indignation and shame: indignation, at the want of forethought, courage, and conduct on the part of the national executive; and shame, at the humiliating spectacle we presented to the world—we who had begun the war in boasting, now seeing our officials disgraced by pusillanimity, and our capital desecrated by the presence and occupation of an enemy! I shall let this humiliating page in our history pass, with the simple remark, that the feeble and cowardly President seems on that occasion to have drunk deep of the bitter cup of humiliation, in recompense for having bartered the peace of the country for the poor bauble of a second term of office. The future has, doubtless, some instructive light to shed upon this passage of our national history.*

* Whoever wishes to see a detail of the facts in this case will find them in Hildreth's United States, second series, page 507. There was

A few weeks after the capture of Washington, the British troops, led by General Ross, landed at North Point, fourteen miles from Baltimore, and immediately commenced their march toward the city. They were met by the American militia, and in a skirmish, the British general was killed. The enemy advanced the next morning as far as the defenses of that place, hastily thrown up by the Americans; here they made several threatening demonstrations, but such was the firm and formidable front of the Americans, that the next morning they silently withdrew, and speedily embarked on board their shipping. While the British were marching on Baltimore, the fleet advanced up the Patapsco, and bombarded Fort McHenry nearly a whole day and night. The gallant and effectual defense of that fortress, gave rise to the beautiful national song of the "Star-spangled Banner."*

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a feeble attempt at defense, at Bladensburg, five miles from Washington; but the United States troops as well as our militia fled upon the first fire of the enemy. The President and his secretaries dispersed in like manner. This scampering was satirized under the name of the "Bladensburg Races." Madison and his wife found refuge in a Maryland farm-house, where they spent two days and three nights of mortification, alarm, and insult from the irritated inhabitants. After a short time the enemy departed: another party of them, however, had made their way to Alexandria, where they compelled the inhabitants to sacrifice all their merchandise and all their shipping to save the city. Madison returned to Washington, and in order to hide his disgrace, laid all the blame to Armstrong, the Secretary of War. The latter retaliated, asserting that the President yielded to the "humor of a village mob, stimulated by faction and led by folly."

* The author of this admired national lyric was Francis Scott Key, of Maryland, born August 1, 1779. He became a lawyer, and was Dis-

As summer advanced, the clouds seemed to thicken over our country on every side. The coasts of New York and New England were kept in a constant state of anxiety and alarm, by British squadrons sweeping our shipping from the sea, and occasionally making descents upon the land. The treasury of the United States was exhausted,* and the government

trict Attorney of the city of Washington, where he died, January, 1843. He wrote several songs, though not for publication, as he seems not to have duly appreciated them. To feel the full force of the *Star-spangled Banner*, it is necessary to know its origin. A gentleman of Baltimore had gone to the British fleet with a flag of truce, in order to get a friend of his released, who had been captured at Marlborough. He was not permitted to return, as he might give information of the intended attack upon Baltimore. While thus on board a British vessel, he witnessed the attack upon Fort McHenry during the whole day. When night set in, the flag, which still floated, was hidden from his view. The bombardment was kept up, and his heart was agitated with the most anxious fears. As the morning rose, he had the unbounded satisfaction of seeing the banner of his country still flying aloft, in evidence of successful defense. The whole story is admirably told in the song.

* The state of the treasury, as presented to Congress by Campbell, the Secretary, in Sept. 1814, was deplorable. The last attempt to borrow six millions had only produced offers for half that amount, and these at the rate of eighty per cent. The credit of the government was indeed almost gone: specie had disappeared; the banks had generally suspended specie payments; the currency consisted of bank-notes, at a large depreciation. The treasury was in fact empty, and large debts and expenses were accumulating and soon to be met. Every kind of scheme was suggested for supplying the exhausted and discredited treasury—new loans, increased taxes, various kinds of government stocks, and finally a national bank. Dallas, Secretary of the Treasury, proposed a non-specie paying bank, and Calhoun a specie-paying bank. Neither of these two plans succeeded. The Bank of the United States, which had so remarkable a career, and was finally extinguished by Gen. Jackson, was chartered April 10th, 1816, the plan having been framed by Secretary Dallas. It was in fact rather a democratic institution; the federalists at that time seeming to foresee the evils which followed, strove earnestly to reduce the capital of thirty-five millions to twenty millions, but without avail.

seemed on the point of bankruptcy. And more than all—Napoleon had fallen, and on the 4th of April had departed for his exile at Elba; the allies had triumphed—Great Britain, the mistress of the sea, the leading power of the world, was now free to turn her whole power against us in America. She was exasperated by the feeling that we had declared war against her, with the design of aiding her great enemy at the very time she was struggling for self-preservation against nearly all Europe, which he had combined against her. Already the veterans who had triumphed under Wellington, were collecting in Canada, and the ships, long occupied in the European war, were crowding hither, like vultures, eager for their prey. Dismay spread along the whole maritime frontier, where the inhabitants, no longer placing any reliance upon the general government, which seemed totally paralyzed, were all up in arms, mustering and drilling with one hundred and twenty thousand militia in the field. Portland, Boston, Providence, New Haven, New York, Baltimore, Richmond, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, were busy in throwing up fortifications.*

I remember perfectly well, the universal state of anxiety and depression which prevailed in New England at this time. The acts of government, the movements of fleets and armies, furnish no idea of the con-

* Hildreth, second series, vol. iii. p. 524.

dition of society in its daily life. Let me give you a few items as indications of the embarrassments, vexations, and privations which the war had brought unto every man's house and home. Such a thing as silver or gold money was almost unknown. The chief circulation consisted of bills of suspended banks, or what were called "facilities;" that is, bank-notes, authorized by the legislature of Connecticut, redeemable in three years after the war. These were at fifteen to twenty-five per cent. discount compared with specie. Banks issued notes of fifty, twenty-five, and twelve-and-a-half cents. Barbers put out bills, payable in shaving, and various institutions adopted a similar course. This whole mass acquired the title of "rag money," "shin-plasters," &c.: a large portion of it was notoriously worthless, either as being counterfeit, or issued by irresponsible parties, yet it generally passed without scrutiny. I recollect a person at a turnpike-gate offered a five-dollar bank-note, and received in change a large, greasy wad of bills, of various names, hues, and designs. He glanced at it, and said to the keeper—"Why, half of this is counterfeit!"

"I know it," was the reply; "but it passes just as well as any other."

A specie bank-bill* was almost an object of worship. An anecdote will illustrate this. In our city of H....

* The New England banks continued to pay specie, but their notes were rare. The bills of suspended banks of the Middle States and "facilities," constituted the chief money in circulation.

there were a shrewd man and a greedy man, who had some dealings with each other about these days, when the following scene occurred:

Shrewd Man. Do you recollect giving me a ten-dollar bill in change yesterday, Mr. C....?

Greedy Man. No, I don't: why do you ask?

S. M. Well, I found a specie bill of ten dollars in my purse, and I thought, perhaps, I might have received it of you. You remember I was only entitled to a facility, and not to a specie bill?

G. M. Well, I dare say you had it of me: let me see it.

S. M. There it is!

G. M. Oh yes; I recollect it perfectly. I'll take it, and give you a facility. There!

S. M. Are you sure, Mr. C...., that you gave me that specie bill?

G. M. Certainly, certainly: I recollect it distinctly.

S. M. Well, I'm glad you are sure, for *they tell me the specie bill is counterfeit!*

At this period, all kinds of British merchandise had become very scarce, and many had entirely vanished from the market. There was a small supply of certain articles, from time to time, furnished by the vessels captured by our ships and privateers, and some convenient and necessary goods were smuggled in from Canada. There was, in fact, a large amount of money—and this was all specie—sent to the British Provinces for pins, needles, jewelry, laces, muslins,

cambrics, chintzes, silks, sewing-silk, buttons, &c., &c. These merchandises were so costly that a man would frequently carry the value of a thousand dollars in a pair of saddlebags, sometimes on his shoulders, and sometimes on horseback. The life of the smuggler along the line, at this period, was one of danger and adventure. In some instances, persons laid the foundations of future fortune in this illicit traffic. I recollect very well the prices at which we sold some of these articles: calico, now worth twelve and a half cents, readily brought seventy-five cents the yard; cotton-cambric, now twenty cents, then a dollar; linen handkerchiefs, now fifty cents, then two dollars; fine broadcloth, now five dollars, then twelve, or even fifteen dollars. The average prices of British goods, at retail, were about four times what they are now.

In point of fact, however, our dry-goods trade was almost destroyed. Domestic products were enormously dear—flour at one time eighteen dollars a barrel—at Boston! I had personal experience of the universal depression. In the summer of 1814, I was out of my time, and cast about for some employment. I went to New York for this object, but found not the slightest encouragement. After some reflection, I established a manufactory of pocket-books, in connection with one of my friends, J. S. S...., who furnished the capital. The greatest difficulty was to find the materials. I made expeditions to Boston, Charles-

ton, Providence, &c., and was not able to obtain over fifty pieces of morocco fit for the purpose. In December I went to New York, and was more successful. I had made a considerable purchase, and dispatched my goods by the wagoner, for you will remember that Long Island Sound was in the occupation of the enemy.* Pretty well content with my success, I had gone in the evening to a concert at the City Hotel. While listening to the music, there was a murmur in the streets. Soon the door of the concert-room was thrown open, and in rushed a man all breathless with excitement. He mounted on a table, and swinging a white handkerchief aloft, cried out—

"Peace! Peace! Peace!"

The music ceased: the hall was speedily vacated. I rushed into the street, and oh, what a scene! But, I beg your pardon, I have not yet done with the war!

Amidst general gloom and despondency, a broad ray of light came suddenly from the north—the general scene of disaster and disgrace. In the spring of this year, General Wilkinson was superseded by General Izard, but while the latter, with the flower of the American army, was drawn off toward Sackett's Harbor, the British general, Provost, advanced across the country toward Plattsburg, situated on the western side of Lake Champlain. Hitherto the enemy's

* Freight from New York to Hartford, now fifty cents a hundred, was then four dollars a hundred.

force in this quarter had been small, but now, replenished by the veterans who had fought in the Peninsula under Wellington, and who had seemed invincible, he mustered twelve thousand men. Macomb, the American commander, left with only three thousand regular troops, was soon reinforced by three thousand militia from Vermont and New York. He was strongly intrenched behind the Saranac—which flows through Plattsburg to the lake—and here the enemy assailed him. The British fleet, under Commodore Downie, came gallantly on to their assistance: Macdonough,* commander of the American squadron, now closed with them, and then came such a fight as is seldom seen. It was a deadly action of more than two hours—ship to ship, broadside to broadside. At last the enemy was silenced—victory was on our side. Nearly the whole British fleet was captured. This was decisive of the conflict in this quarter. Simultaneously with the naval attack, the land forces of the enemy had advanced against the Americans under Macomb. But the defeat of the naval

* Thomas Macdonough was a native of Delaware, and was born in 1784. When the battle of Lake Champlain was fought, he was but twenty-eight years of age. In commemoration of his victory, the citizens of Hartford presented him with a splendid sword. I recollect the occasion, and the appearance of the gallant officer. He was nearly six feet high, very broad-shouldered, with a small head, but finely set, so as to give a look of mingled dignity and elegance to his form. His hair was light, almost flaxen, his eye gray, and his countenance mild, but with an expression of firmness. In his personal character, he was marked with gentleness and dignity. His private life was most blameless. He died in 1825.

force disheartened them, a panic ensued, and under cover of a storm, they hastily retreated, leaving behind them their sick and wounded, and a part of their baggage and stores. Their whole loss was estimated at no less than two thousand five hundred men! This double victory—Sept. 11, 1814—was indeed some compensation for the disgrace inflicted upon us a few weeks before at Washington.

The clouds of despondency, however, still lowered over our country, in its length and breadth. It is now known that the Administration was deeply alarmed at the perilous condition into which it had brought the country. The humbled and dismayed President, in his message to Congress in September,* evidently thinking no more of conquest, was solely occupied with the means of self-preservation. But however painful the condition of other parts of the United States, New England, beyond all question, was exposed to peculiar and trying difficulties. Her preparation for the war had been a series of destructive acts on the part of the government, which had spread general poverty throughout her entire territories. Commerce, which was then her life, had nearly perished under embargoes and non-intercourse acts, to

* "It is not to be disguised," said he, "that the situation of our country calls for its greatest efforts. Our enemy is powerful in men and money, on the land and on the water. Availing himself of fortuitous advantages (the triumph over Napoleon), he is aiming, with his undivided force, a deadly blow at our growing prosperity, perhaps at our national existence." This is from a President who had declared war, a short time before, with the expectation of conquering Canada!

which had now been added three years of war.* And in this condition she had been left by the general government without defense, having a coast of seven hundred miles exposed to the enemy. That enemy, in the full triumph of his arms over Napoleon, was gathering his forces along the northern frontier, and spreading his navies over our waters, and in the very sight of our seaports. Already portions of our territory were in his possession, and our towns and villages were not only exposed, but some of them had been actually subjected, to ravage and plunder.

There was evidently no hope but in the people themselves. The general government had abandoned them: it is historical, and beyond dispute, that while the policy of the Administration allowed and encour-

* It is startling to look back at the financial records of the country at this time: the destructive effects of the embargo are abundantly attested by documentary evidence. The exports of the United States in 1807—that is, before the embargo—were $108,343,558; in 1808, under the embargo, they were $8,417,000—a diminution of a hundred millions in a single year! The whole loss to the United States in the destruction of commerce, alone—during the seven years of embargo, non-intercourse, non-importation, and war—all forming one system, under Jefferson and Madison democracy, would show a fearful sum—amounting to hundreds of millions. To this is to be added the war expenses, the depreciation of property, the wide-spread devastation of productive enterprise, &c., &c. Let it be understood that New England, from her position, took more than her relative share of this burden; let it also be understood that she believed all these measures to have had a sinister origin; let it, furthermore, be held in view, that events, thus far, had fulfilled her predictions as to the destructive tendency of this whole policy; and then we may be prepared to ask whether she had not a right to call together her Wise Men, as had been her custom from the foundation of the first settlements, to take into consideration the state of public affairs, and recommend the means of averting the evils which impended over her?

aged the democratic governors of several States to call out the local militia for defense, permitting them to have their own officers and paying the expenses thus incurred, a totally different system was adopted in respect to the federal States of New England. Here the general government insisted upon the exclusive control of military movements, and flatly refused paying the militia, because they were not placed under the command of United States officers. What was then to be done? This was the anxious question in city, village, and hamlet, from one end of the country to the other. The people—the great body of the people—were agitated with a deep sense of injury, of suffering, of anxiety. In this state of things, a project was suggested, in the good old Puritan county of Hampshire, in Massachusetts, which resulted in the Hartford Convention. It had been the custom, from time immemorial—in days of doubt and danger—for the inhabitants of the Pilgrim land to call together their wise men, to seek, by counsel and co-operation, the path of duty and deliverance. The history of New England tells us that, on almost every page. Had they not a right to do so now? Was it not natural for them to take this course—to follow the example of their fathers? Is it fair, is it just, is it reasonable, to seek any other motive than this, which lies open and plain upon the face of things, with nothing to contradict it?

I have a few more words to say on that subject,

but I lay them aside for the present, that I may complete my chronological memoranda of the war. This done, I will give you my recollections of that famous or infamous assembly.

It was now evident to the whole country that we had changed positions with the enemy. At the outset, the war was aggressive on our part: we had sought to invade and conquer a portion of his territory: in this we had failed, and now released from his embarrassments, he was threatening us on all sides, thus calling upon us for defense. It appears that the Administration now felt the absolute necessity of bringing the war to a close. Great Britain had made an offer to treat for peace, and our government accepted it, appointing J. Q. Adams, Henry Clay, Jonathan Russell, Albert Gallatin, and J. A. Bayard, as Commissioners for that object. The instructions at first given, required them to insist upon a withdrawal of the pretensions of Great Britain to the right of search and impressment—the only substantial object of the war. After the news of the prostration of Napoleon, other instructions were given, directing that even this should not be insisted upon. The agents of the two governments met at Ghent, in Belgium, in August. As we had withdrawn every material obstruction, a treaty of peace was finally agreed upon and signed, at Ghent, Dec. 24, 1814.

The news of this event did not reach the United States until the 11th of February, 1815—a space of

forty-nine days—for then steam navigation had not brought the Old and New World within ten days' sail. While the tidings of peace were thus lagging across the Atlantic, the war still lowered over our country. It was soon apparent that the enemy meditated a blow at some portion of the Southern States. At length, after various movements, and some severe encounters with our forces under General Jackson, the British general, Packenham, advanced against the American intrenchments, four miles below New Orleans, with a force of twelve thousand men. Their design evidently was to capture New Orleans. Behind their breastworks of bales of cotton, six thousand Americans, mostly militia, awaited the attack. It came, but our well-aimed cannon and deadly rifles mowed down the enemy like a scythe. The plain was speedily covered with the dead and the dying. General Packenham was killed, and his successor, Gibbs, was mortally wounded. The British troops—most of them veterans, and conquerors in many a bloody field—were panic-stricken, and fled. The loss on their side was seven hundred killed and one thousand wounded: the loss on ours was seven killed and six wounded! The Saxon had met the Saxon: the American rifle had triumphed over the British bayonet. It was on our part a glorious victory; but let it be remembered, that it was in defense of our territories—our homes and firesides. The moral of the war is well told in its opening and

closing scenes: in attempting conquest, our flag was humbled at Detroit; in self-defense, it became immortal at New Orleans!

This great victory on the part of General Jackson —which afterward carried him into the presidential chair—took place on the 8th of January, 1815—fifteen days after the signing of the treaty of peace. The rumor of this triumph had reached Washington, and began to raise the drooping spirits of the country; but a still more cheering event was at hand. As I have already stated, the news of the treaty of peace arrived in New York on the 11th of February, 1815. It was about eight o'clock on Saturday evening, that the tidings circulated through the city. I have told you that I was there. In half an hour after the news reached the wharf, Broadway was one living sea of shouting, rejoicing people. "Peace! peace! peace!" was the deep, harmonious, universal anthem. The whole spectacle was enlivened by a sudden inspiration. Somebody came with a torch: the bright idea passed into a thousand brains. In a few minutes, thousands and tens of thousands of people were marching about with candles, lamps, torches—making the jubilant street appear like a gay and gorgeous procession. The whole night Broadway sang its song of peace. We were all democrats, all federalists! Old enemies rushed into each other's arms: every house was in a revel: every heart seemed melted by a joy which banished all evil thought

and feeling. Nobody asked, that happy night, what were the terms of the treaty: we had got peace—that was enough! I moved about for hours in the ebbing and flowing tide of people, not being aware that I had opened my lips. The next morning I found that I was hoarse from having joined in the exulting cry of peace, peace!

The next day, Sunday, all the churches sent up hymns of thanksgiving for the joyous tidings. I set out in the stage-coach on Monday morning for Connecticut. All along the road, the people saluted us with swinging of hats and cries of rejoicing. At one place, in rather a lonesome part of the road, a schoolmaster came out with the whole school at his heels to ask us if the news was true. We told him it was: whereupon he tied his bandanna pocket-handkerchief to a broom, swung it aloft, and the whole school hosannaed—"Peace! peace!" At all our stopping-places, the people were gathered to rejoice in the good tidings. At one little tavern, I looked into a room, by chance, the door being open, and there I saw the good wife, with a chubby boy in her lap—both in a perfect gale of merriment—the child crying out, "Peath! peath!" Oh, ye makers of war, reflect upon this heartfelt verdict of the people in behalf of peace!

We arrived at New Haven in the evening, and found it illuminated: the next day I reached Hartford, and there was a grand illumination there. The news

"PEACE!" "PEACE!" Vol. 1, p. 504.

spread over the country, carrying with it a wave of shouts and rejoicings. Boston became clamorous with pealing bells; the schools had a jubilee; the blockaded shipping, rotting at the dilapidated wharves, got out their dusty buntings, and these—ragged and forlorn—now flapped merrily in the breeze. At night the city flamed far and wide—from Beacon-street down the bay, telling the glorious tale even unto Cape Cod. So spread the news over the country, everywhere carrying joy to every heart—with, perhaps, a single exception. At Washington, the authors of the war peeped into the dispatches, and found that the treaty had no stipulations against Orders in Council, Paper Blockades, or Impressments! All that could be maintained was, that we had made war, charging the enemy with very gross enormities, and we had made peace, saying not one word about them! Madison and his party had in fact swallowed the declaration of war whole, and it naturally caused some uneasy qualms in the regions of digestion. "Let us, however," said they, "put a good face upon it: we can hide our shame for the moment in the smoke of Jackson's victory; as to the rest, why we can brag the country into a belief that it has been a glorious war!" Madison set the example in a boasting message, and his party organs took up the tune, and have played it bravely till the present day.

But what saith history—not partisan history, not

history addressed to Buncombe, not history written in subservient demagogism to national vanity—but history, speaking the truth and fearing not? What saith the record?* Assuredly this, that the war had its origin in partisan interests, and was carried on in a similar spirit; that it was the war of the Administration, and not of the nation, and so far was disastrous and disgraceful. It was begun without preparation, it was carried on in weakness; it was characterized by failure, it was terminated by a treaty which left us where we began—save only that a hundred millions of dollars and thirty thousand lives had been expend-

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* I commend to the reader the following observations from a calm and sober writer:

"An inquiry here naturally suggests itself—as, after the revocation of the British Orders in Council, Impressment was the only grievance to be redressed by war; and as that question was subsequently waived by our government in the negotiation, *what was gained by the war?* It has been considered as no small point gained, that ample evidence has been given to Great Britain of our capacity successfully to resist her power, especially upon the ocean, where she had long claimed a vast superiority; and that a guarantee had thus been furnished against future aggression. It is questionable, however, if the result could have been known, *or if the unbiased counsels of our older statesmen had prevailed, whether war would have been declared. Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, Macon, and others, were of a pacific disposition. The leading men of the administration were known to have given a reluctant sanction to the war project; but they found themselves under a kind of necessity to yield to the impulsive young politicians—Calhoun, Clay, and a number of others—who, it was suspected, were striving to turn the popular prejudices against Great Britain to their own political advantage.* Whether the nation has ever obtained an equivalent for the thirty thousand lives, and the hundred millions of money expended; for the loss of property and of several years of prosperous commerce; for the depravation of the public morals, and the train of other evils inseparable from a state of war, is a question which at least admits of a reasonable doubt."—*Young's American Statesman.*

ed in the inglorious struggle. All the lights of this period belong to the people or to the opposition—all the shadows to the war-makers. Hull's surrender, Dearborn's blunders, Wilkinson's abortions, were the work of the Administration, attempting the conquest of Canada: the desecration of Washington is wholly chargeable to the personal weakness and pusillanimity of the President and his cabinet. The glory of the navy belongs to the federalists, who were its fathers—the democrats being its open and avowed enemies and opposers: the victories of Plattsburg, Baltimore, and New Orleans, belong not to the spirit of Madison, who would conquer Canada, but to that spirit which is indigenous to the country, to the people —democrats and federalists—everywhere—who will fight and conquer in defense of our soil, even though the war be brought upon us by a feeble and unpatriotic government.

Let us be frank, and confess the truth: the war, in the aspects in which history thus presents it, was disgraceful to the authors of it: it was, in many respects, disastrous to the country; and yet it has left us some wholesome lessons. It has shown the danger and folly of plunging a great country into a national conflict, for narrow and selfish purposes, because—under such circumstances—the people will be divided, and it will be a partisan and not a patriotic war; it has put on record another instance in which war has been declared in boasting, and ended precisely where it be-

gan, after years of violence, sorrow, and bloodshed; it has shown our weakness in a war of conquest, and our strength in a war of defense; it has shown us that the sea is the true theater upon which we should ever be prepared to attack and repel every European enemy. It has shown us that without preparation, and with divided counsels, we are weak, but that with union of heart and proper precautions, we need not fear any combination the world can bring against us. It has shown, also—in connection with subsequent events—the superiority of peace to war, even in obtaining the ends of justice, for let it be remembered, that Daniel Webster extorted from Great Britain by the force of argument, that which the sword could not achieve. His letter to Lord Ashburton* silenced, and doubtless forever, the British pretensions to the "right of search"—thus demonstrating the superiority of an old federal quill, to all the gunpowder that mere Madison democracy could command! The pen is master of the sword.

And now, my dear C...., I ask you in all serious-

* This remarkable letter—dated Washington, August 8, 1842—will be found in Mr. Webster's Works, vol. vi. p. 318. Mr. Everett says, in his memoir of Mr. Webster, "The reply of Lord Ashburton must be considered as acquiescence on the part of his government;" that is, acquiescence in the American doctrine of maritime rights—that the flag of a country renders the decks of its ships inviolable against visit or search. The London Times, Standard, &c., about this period, expressed the opinion that this subject was finally put to rest by Mr. Webster's letter. It is understood that Lord Aberdeen said to Mr. Everett, that its argument was unanswerable: it has been effectively answered, however, by quietly yielding to its doctrines.

ness—is it not time for that arrogance to cease—which claims for democracy all the patriotism, all the success, all the glory of the war of 1812, and charges upon federalism a uniform course of secret or open treason, with the responsibility of all the failures, disasters, and disgraces which attended the conflict?

Let me observe, by the way, that I do not condemn the feelings of the great body of the democrats, in their support of the war. Believing it to be just and proper, their ardor, their patriotism, their perseverance in the maintenance of the struggle, were honorable to them. I do full homage to their spirit, to their patriotism. I can overlook that partisan bigotry which burned in their bosoms at the time, and even embittered the intercourse of society. It was natural for them to feel indignant at the conduct of those who —holding opposite opinions—pursued an opposite course, in so serious a question as that of war with a foreign enemy. Nor was their example, in this respect, very different from that of the federalists. Both parties were wrought into a kind of frenzy by the irritation of mutual opposition and mutual hostility.

While doing this justice to the democracy, I claim the same candor for the federalists. They acted according to their convictions, as I have before said, and this was not only their right but their duty. The doctrine of the war partisans, holding legal, constitutional opposition to an administration which has declared war, to be treason, is alike dangerous and

despotic. A war may be declared merely to serve a party: the administration may be base, incompetent, treacherous; yet, if this doctrine be true, the people —having lost the greatest of all rights—the right to think, speak, and act, according to their convictions —are bound to give a blind and slavish support to those who, either by incompetence or corruption, are leading the country to ruin.

Let me invite your attention to the principles of New England—the federalists of New England—as stated by Daniel Webster, in a Fourth of July oration, at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a few days after the declaration of war:

"With respect to the war in which we are now involved, the course which our principles require us to pursue can not be doubtful. It is now the law of the land, and as such we are bound to regard it. Resistance and insurrection form no part of our creed. The disciples of Washington are neither tyrants *in* power, nor rebels *out*. If we are taxed to carry on this war, we shall disregard certain distinguished examples,* and shall pay.

* This was an allusion to the Whisky Rebellion in Western Pennsylvania, in 1794, which Albert Gallatin—one of Madison's cabinet, and a prominent supporter of the war—had done much to stimulate. The inhabitants of that quarter were chiefly foreigners. The law which offended them was passed by Congress in 1791, and laid a tax on distilled spirits—one of their chief products at that time. A considerable army was assembled by the malcontents, and the United States revenue officers were resisted, whipped, tarred and feathered. The insurrection was finally put down by a proclamation issued by the President (Washington), and the marching toward the scene of action of a respectable body of militia, under Gov. Lee, of Maryland.

This resistance, however, was in some degree pardonable, considering the general ignorance and character of those concerned in it, and considering, also, that the general government had just gone into op-

If our personal services are required, we shall yield them to the precise extent of our constitutional liability. At the same time the world may be assured that we know our rights and shall exercise them. We shall express our opinions on this as on every measure of government, I trust without passion, I am certain without fear. We have yet to hear that the extravagant progress of pernicious measures abrogates the duty of opposition, or that the interest of our native land is to be abandoned by us in the hour of the thickest danger and most necessity. By the exercise of our constitutional right of suffrage—by the peaceful remedy of election—we shall seek to restore wisdom to our councils, and peace to our country."*

That was the federal doctrine, and that the federal practice. Now I put it to your conscience—is not

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eration, and called for unaccustomed sacrifices on the part of the people. It was otherwise in the case of South Carolina, when, in the autumn of 1832, she made a general movement to resist the tariff laws of Congress, on the ground that they were unconstitutional. This course had been recommended by a convention and various public meetings, and the legislature of the State, meeting soon after, sanctioned these views. The tariff acts were declared null and void, and in order to resist their execution, active measures were adopted to arm the citizens. The city of Charleston became at once a great military depot, and the whole State was bristling with bayonets. Col. Hayne, who, a short time before, in the Senate of the United States, had arraigned the members of the Hartford Convention as traitors, now became governor of the State, for the express purpose of directing this formidable treason. Mr. Calhoun resigned the vice-presidency, and accepted a seat in the Senate, for the purpose of there vindicating the conduct of his State. This fearful blow, aimed directly at the Constitution and the Union, was averted by what is called the Compromise of Mr. Clay—which, in point of fact, consisted in forcing the general government to yield to a menace of rebellion. The movement was so far successful, that it cherished the seeds of Nullification, which had been widely sown by Jefferson and his associates in the Southern States; and at the present day, its doctrines may be considered as held by a majority of the democratic party there. Compare all this with the conduct of New England federalism!

* See the New York Evening Post for July 21, 1812—where this is held to be sound federal doctrine.

this more manly, more American, more in the spirit of true liberty, than the slavish doctrine which holds every man to be a traitor who does not support the administration—good or bad, wise or unwise—even against his honest convictions?*

If, then, the people of New England had a right to follow their convictions, what was their actual conduct? Look closely into the history of the times—peruse the acts of legislatures, the doings of authorized public assemblies—and you will find a uniform, unswerving loyalty to the Constitution, the country, and the laws. The federalists of New England did not—like Albert Gallatin and other democrats, afterward supporters of the war, and believers in the doctrine that opposition is treason—rise in rebellion, and seek to overthrow the government. They did not—like Calhoun, another democrat, and one of the chief authors of the war, as well as one of the promoters of this gag-law of conscience—array the States in arms, and cry out for a dissolution of the Union! They did not—as is now the fashion, even with certain democrats in full communion with the party—claim that the Union shall be

* If we admit this doctrine, that opposition to an administration in time of war is treason, then Chatham, who advocated the cause of America in the British Parliament, during the Revolution, was a traitor; Lamartine, Cavaignac, and Victor Hugo, who opposed Louis Napoleon's war for the suppression of the Roman Republic, were traitors; all the friends of liberty, who, from time immemorial, have opposed the wars of their respective governments for the perpetuation of tyranny, are to be inscribed in the list of traitors. Certainly democracy errs in employing despotism and injustice, under the pretense of propagating liberty. There is no surer way to make liberty itself feared and hated

torn asunder, whenever the administration of the government does not altogether please them. No: their standard of duty was higher than that—resistance and insurrection formed no part of their creed or their conduct: they were taxed, and they paid; their personal services were required, and they rendered them to the extent of their constitutional liability; they defended the country, and even the property of the United States, when the general government was powerless to protect them; they stood by the Constitution, as a thing too sacred to be violated, even under the extremest oppression of what they deemed an unwise and unpatriotic government!

Who, then, has a right to accuse them of treason? Not the Nullifier, nor the Disunionist, nor the Secessionist — all clamorous for the destruction of the Union, whenever, in their opinion, the government is not properly administered; surely no member of a party, which holds in its bosom, and cherishes as in full fellowship, individuals who are chiefly distinguished for bearing these names, and for asserting and propagating these doctrines! Strange is it—passing strange—that from the beginning—in peace or war—New England Federalism should have furnished a steady example of loyalty to the Constitution, and that—springing from her bosom, and expressive of her spirit—she should have given to this country the acknowledged Champion of the Constitution and the Union; that at the same time, South-

ern Democracy should have been the breeder of secession and disunion; that it should have furnished to the country the Arch Nullifier himself; and yet that this same Democracy presumes to point its finger at New England, and cry—"*Treason, treason to the Union!*" Certainly a democrat may steal a horse, but a federalist may not look over a hedge!

Let us, my dear C...., be just—just in the sight of God and man; let us render homage to the patriotism of the great body of the people of the United States—democrats and federalists—during the war of 1812–14. We may sincerely admire that cheerful, gallant, devoted spirit, which sustained the struggle without inquiring as to its justice or its prudence; at the same time, we are bound equally to respect that calmness and equanimity with which a people, deeply conscious of injury and injustice, observed the laws, and, within their limits, defied alike the aggressions of a partisan government and a foreign enemy. Doing this justice to the people, on both sides and of both parties, let history hold to a stern reckoning the selfishness of those men who declared or promoted the war, merely or mainly to subserve the interests of party!

APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

Town of Ridgefield.

This town lies about sixty miles northeast of New York, and forty northwest of New Haven. There is, as I have elsewhere stated, in the Library of the Atheneum at Hartford, Conn., a manuscript work, entitled "A Statistical Account of Ridgefield, in the county of Fairfield, drawn up by Rev. Samuel Goodrich, from minutes furnished by a number of his parishioners, A. D. 1800." From this account I give the following extracts:

"Ridgefield was located to twenty-nine of the inhabitants of the towns of Milford and Norwich, by the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, on the 13th of May, 1708. Various patents were granted, and the soil rights of these were purchased of the Indians at different times. The first was made of *Catoonah*, the sachem, and others, the condition being one hundred pounds. The boundaries of the town, fixed about the year 1733, left it of an oblong shape, about fifteen miles long and three to five miles wide: including the two parishes of Ridgebury and Ridgefield proper.

"There is the appearance of several Indian graves at a place called Norron's Ridge; and one elevation retains its Indian name of Arproone —high or lofty. Several ponds also retain their Indian designations, as Umpewauge, Mamnemusquah, Nisopach, &c. There is but one Indian man in the town. One died here two years ago, aged about 96. In 1799, there were ten common schools and four hundred and thirty-three scholars. There are three foreigners—all paupers: Jagger, an Englishman, ninety-five years old, who served under the Duke of Cumberland in the battle of Culloden, 1746, and was in Flanders, in the same regiment, previous to this battle.

"The general form of the land is in gently swelling ridges, extending from north to south. High Ridge, in the central part, called Candito by the Indians, is very elevated; from this the mountains west of

the Hudson, and West Rock, near New Haven—a view eighty miles in diameter—are to be seen in fair weather; Long Island Sound also, from fifty to sixty miles, is visible. The waters flowing from this hill, flow some southeasterly into the Sound, and some southwesterly into the Hudson, by the rivers Titicus and Croton. The latter, in fact, has its source here.

"The soil is generally fertile, though many parts are stony; the climate, owing to the elevation of the place, is somewhat severe, but it is salubrious. Formerly there were bear, deer, and wolves, but these have disappeared. Racoons, various kinds of squirrels, rabbits, &c., are plentiful, as also quails, partridges, &c. The flocks of wild-pigeons, formerly very abundant, now make their migrations more to the west than formerly."

Partly from this document, and partly from notes furnished me by Mr. A. Ressequie, of Ridgefield, I take the following memoranda:

Ministers of the First Congregational Church in Ridgefield.

Rev. Thomas Hawley, of Northampton, the first minister, and one of the first settlers, installed in 1714, and died 1739.

Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll,	installed	1740,	died	1778.
Rev. Samuel Goodrich,	ordained	1786,	dismissed	1811.
Rev. S. M. Phelps,	"	1817,	"	1829.
Rev. C. G. Silleck,	"	1831,	"	1837.
Rev. Joseph Fuller,	"	1838,	"	1842.
Rev. James A. Hawley,	"	——,	"	——.
Rev. Clinton Clark,	"	——, the present pastor.		

Some of the Inhabitants of Ridgefield, noticed in the preceding pages.

Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll was a native of Milford, graduated at Yale College in 1736, and died 1778, while in the ministry at Ridgefield. He joined the colonial troops as chaplain, on Lake Champlain, in 1758; he was much respected in the army, and exerted an excellent influence on the soldiers. He left behind him a name honored for purity, learning, eloquence, and devotion to his duty, in the village where the greater part of his life was spent. From an election sermon, which I find in the Library of the Hartford Atheneum, it would appear that he was master of a very felicitous style of writing.*

* The following letter, addressed to his brother, noted in the history of Connecticut for accepting the office of stamp-master under the obnoxious stamp-act of 1764,

Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll died Oct. 2, 1778, in the 65th year of his age. Dorcas Moss, his wife, died Sept. 29, 1811, in the 86th year of her age. They had ten children, as follows:

Sarah, born Oct. 28, 1741—married —— Lee.
Dorcas, born Oct. 15, 1743—married —— Andrews.
Jonathan, born April 16, 1747—married Miss Isaacs.
Mary, born Dec. 20, 1748—married —— Hooker.
Abigail, born May 7, 1751—married Col. D. Olmstead.
Joseph, born Aug. 11, 1753—deaf and dumb—not married.
Hannah, born April 9, 1756—married —— Raymond.
Esther, born Aug. 10, 1760—married Lieut. Olmstead.
Moss, born June 9, 1763—deaf and dumb—married Miss Smith.
Anne, born April 5, 1765—married Gen. Joshua King, died 1838.

Gen. Joshua King was born at Braintree, Colony of Massachusetts Bay, 24th of November, 1758. He entered the army of the Revolution, a mere boy, at the commencement of hostilities between the colonies and the mother country. On the formation of Sheldon's

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and furnished to me by Hon. R. I. Ingersoll, of New Haven, will be read with interest:

"Ridgefield, June 9th, A. D. 1758.

"Dear Brother:—Yours from Hartford, the 1st instant, came safe to hand by Mr. Olmstead, for which I am heartily obliged to you. I remarked in particular your observing something of heaviness in my countenance at parting with you at New Haven—upon which I would observe that this bidding farewell is a difficult thing, and tends greatly to move the passions. This sin being a natural infirmity, you will easily overlook. Blessed be God, I am neither disheartened nor elevated, but enjoy a good temper of mind, and can, I think, put my life in the hands of God and go forth freely and cheerfully, in so important though dangerous an enterprise. I have this day received a line from Col. Wooster, by which I am informed that I must be at Norwalk to-morrow, in order to embark for Albany. I am ready, and rejoice at the news. He also informs me that you are appointed agent, and have accepted, at which I greatly rejoice, and hope your courage will hold out, and desire that you will be made a blessing to your country and government in this important undertaking. The office is very honorable, and I hope will be profitable to you and the government. By no means refuse, but look upon it as a favor of Providence. To love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves, is the great gospel command. And to be impressed in such an important affair, must be looked upon as a favor from Heaven; for the voice of the people (to judge rationally) is the voice of God, when they look to him for his influence and direction.

"Your family need you and desire you, and so does mine me; but private matters must submit to the public good. Sister, I hope, will quietly acquiesce—from a view of your usefulness, though it be a piece of great self-denial. I could wish you had had the small-pox—a terror to the world; and perhaps it would be best to go to Doctor Munson, on Long Island, and inoculate—and was I not going abroad

regiment of dragoons, he was made a cornet, and afterward a lieutenant, in which capacity he continued during the war, ever sustaining the character of a brave officer. Being stationed on the lines of Connecticut and Westchester county, New York, he became attached to this part of the country, and after the peace of 1783, he settled in Ridgefield, in the mercantile business, commencing in company with Lieut. James Dole of the same regiment, and afterward marrying the youngest daughter of the late Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll, April 18th, 1784. He was several years a member of the Assembly, and was a member of the Convention in 1818, which framed the State Constitution. He died August 13, 1839.*

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as I am, I would go and be with you. With respect to cautions and advice you give, I accept them well, and would give the same to you. And so, my brother, go in the fear of God—be true to your trust, and farewell. Whether we see each other in this life or not, let us labor to meet in glory.

"I remain your affectionate brother,

"JONATHAN INGERSOLL.

"P. S.—We are all well. Send our compliments, particularly our love to Dorcas, and tell her to live in the fear of God.

"JARED INGERSOLL, ESQ., New Haven."

* The following portion of a letter, written to a friend by Gen. King, dated June 19th, 1817, in which he speaks of the capture of André, will be found interesting:

"I was the first and only officer who had charge of him whilst at the headquarters of the second regiment light dragoons, which was then at Esq. Gilbert's, South Salem, Westchester county, N. Y. He was brought up by an adjutant and four men belonging to the Connecticut militia, under command of Lieutenant-colonel Jameson. He was on the lines in a character under the disguised name of John Anderson; he looked somewhat like a reduced gentleman; his small-clothes were nankeen, with handsome white-top boots; in part his dress was military, his coat purple, with gold lace, worn somewhat threadbare; he wore a small-brimmed, tarnished beaver on his head; he wore his hair in a queue with a long black band, and his clothes were somewhat dusty. In this garb I took charge of him to breakfast. My barber came in to dress me, after which I requested him to undergo the same operation, which he did. When the ribbon was taken from his hair, I observed a fall of powder; this circumstance, with others that occurred, induced me to believe I had no ordinary person in charge. He requested permission to take to the bed while his shirt and small-clothes could be washed; I told him it was needless, for a change was at his service, which he accepted. We were close pent up in a bedroom, with a sentinel at the door and window; there was a spacious yard before the door, which he desired he might be permitted to walk in with me. I accordingly disposed of my guard in such manner as to prevent an escape, and while walking together he observed that he must make a confidant of somebody, and he knew not a more proper person than myself, as I had offered to befriend a stranger in distress. After settling the point between ourselves, he told me who he was, and gave me a short account of himself from the time he was taken at St. Johns, in 1775, to that time. He requested pen and ink, and wrote immediately to Gen. Washington, declaring who he was. About midnight the

General King's children were as follows:

Catherine, married to William Hawley, of Ridgefield.

Frances, married to Rev. Wm. Neill, D. D., of Philadelphia; died October, 1832.

Sophia, married to William McHarg, of Albany; died March, 1838.

John Francis, not married; died 1838. Once State Senator.

Charles Clark, not married; died Jan, 1854.

Rufus H., married to Miss Laverty, of New York, and settled at Albany.

Joshua Ingersoll, not married. Once State Senator; resides in the family mansion at Ridgefield.

Anne Maria, married to Elisha W. Skinner, of Albany.

Mary Ann; died November, 1828.

Grace.

Deacon Elisha Hawley was born March 14, 1759. He was the son of Thomas Hawley, Jr., and grandson of the Rev. Thomas Hawley, first pastor in that place, and one of those who settled it, and who removed from Northampton, where the family had been located since their emigration from England. Elisha Hawley lost his father at the age of fourteen, and four years afterward was drafted for service in the struggle with Great Britain, and was sent to New York for the defense of that city. His regiment was stationed at Corlaer's Hook, and the British sent up a part of their fleet to cut off its retreat. The colonel, however, refused to quit his post without orders from his superior officer. When they were received, their retreat was so hasty, as to oblige the men to throw away their muskets and knapsacks. The vigor of our young soldier, with an appreciative sense of their use, allowed him to retain his, which the colonel was glad to share with him, when at night, on the North River, without blankets, they were exposed to the peltings of a violent storm. At daybreak next morning, they took up their march for Harlem Heights, out of reach of the enemy. Here they made their first meal on flour cakes baked on the stones in the sun. Young Hawley was next engaged in cutting off the retreat of the enemy from Danbury, where they had been to destroy stores, &c.

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express returned, with orders from Gen. Washington to Col. Sheldon, to send Major André immediately to head-quarters. I started with him, and before I got to North Salem meeting-house, met another express, with a letter to the officer commanding the party who had Major André in charge; this letter directed a circuitous route to head-quarters, for fear of a recapture—which order was complied with."

In 1786, at the age of twenty-seven, he was married to Charity Judson, of Stratford. They had six sons, two only of whom are living. Shortly after their matrimonial alliance, he and his partner joined the Presbyterian church: he was afterward elected to the office of deacon, which he held during life. Being a man of very temperate and regular life, he enjoyed uninterrupted health, which, with his habits of industry, contributed to give him that vigor of body and mind which made him so remarkable in the later years of his life. In the summer prior to his death, at the age of ninety-one, he would work nearly all day with his men in the field. It was the desire of keeping himself employed that led to the exposure which caused his death. On a chill October day he accompanied his men to his woods, to direct the cutting of timber, taking with him his afternoon meal, and remaining until the day was far advanced. Here he caught cold from the inclemency of the weather, which resulted in his decease in the following April, 1850.

Not only was Mr. Hawley active in promoting his own interests, but he showed equal zeal in assisting his neighbors, visiting the sick, and working for the interests of the community in which he lived. His faculties were unimpaired to the last: his retention of memory was such that he would quote passages from scripture, chapter and verse, and would delight his grand children by singing to them the songs and hymns of his youth. On the celebration of the Fourth of July, 1839, in his native village, he was called upon to address the people, which he did, directing his conversation mostly to the young—telling them of their responsibilities to God and their country, and that upon them depended its future welfare; winding up with the kindly hint contained in that little verse—

"A little farm well tilled,
A little wife well willed,
A little house well filled," &c.—

and closing with singing, in an audible voice, "Hail Columbia," &c.

One of the leading characteristics of his life was his endeavor to follow strictly the golden rule of "Doing unto others," &c.; and in all his business transactions with his fellow-men, his constant exercise of mind was lest he should charge his neighbor more than the article was actually worth.

In relation to his piety, I quote from the obituary sketch written by Rev. Mr. Clark, of Ridgefield: "Throughout his whole life he was untiring and assiduous in the performance of every Christian and social duty. He was always abounding in the work of the Lord,

whether it consisted in visiting the sick, relieving the poor, promoting peace among his neighbors and brethren, contributing freely to benevolent objects, or in prayers and labor for the prosperity of the church with which he was connected, and Zion at large. The memory of his name will long be fragrant among the people where he lived and died. They feel as if their best friend and counsellor had been taken away, and many acknowledge his influence, under Christ, for their hopes which they are permitted to cherish."

Having at one time held the post of chorister in the church, he would often in his old age, in the absence of the leader, set the music for the hymn.

His widow, at the age of ninety-five, still lives (1856), and enjoys remarkably good health.

The children of Deacon Hawley were as follows:

Elisha, Judson, Irad, Daniel, Stiles,* Chauncey. Irad and Judson—now living—have been successful merchants in New York.

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* ON THE DEATH OF A MISSIONARY.

The Rev. Stiles Hawley was drowned in crossing the Kaskaskia river, Illinois, January 30th, 1830.

Cold sweep the waters o'er thee!
Thou hast found,
'Mid all the ardor of thy youthful zeal,
And self-devotion to the Saviour's cause,
An unexpected bed. The ice-swoln tides
Of the Kaskaskia, shall no more resound
To the wild struggles of thy failing steed,
In the deep plunge that gave thy soul to God!

Say, in thy journeyings o'er the snow-clad waste
Of yon lone prairie, on that fearful day
When Death strode by thy side, where roamed thy thoughts?
Upon thine angel mission? or the scenes
Of distant home, with all its sheltering trees,
And voice of tuneful waters? Didst thou hope,
When Heaven's pure seed should blossom in the wild
Of the far Illinois, once more to sit
Beside its hearth-stone, and recount thy toils,
Mingling thy prayers with those who fondly nursed
Thy tender infancy?

Now there are tears
In that abode, whene'er thy cherished name
Escapes the trembling lip. Oh, ye who mourn
With heavy temples o'er the smitten son,
Slain in his Saviour's service, know that pain
Shall never vex him more. Peril and change,

Col. Philip Bradley was born March 26, 1738, and died January 24, 1821. His commission as colonel was dated at Philadelphia, 1779, signed by John Jay, then President of Congress. His commission as Marshal of the District of Connecticut was signed by Washington, in 1794. He also held the office of Judge of the County Court of Fairfield county.

His children were as follows:

Molly, Jabez, Philip, Esther, Ruth, Betsey, Sally, Jesse S.

'Squire Timothy Keeler was born in 1749, and died in 1815. He was a Representative in the General Assembly, Justice of the Peace, and Postmaster for many years.

His children were as follows:

David, married to Esther Bradley.
Esther, married to James L. Crawford.
Walter, married to Hannah Waring.
Mary, married to Philip Bradley.
Sarah, married to Isaac Lewis.
William, not married.
Anna, married to A. Ressequie.

John Baldwin, "Granther," born March 12th, 1728, died November 9, 1809.

Deacon Nathan Olmstead, died 30th of July, 1805, in the 89th year of his age.

Deacon John Benedict, died July 9th, 1814, in the 88th year of his age.

Dr. Perry, died May 21st, 1822, in the 73d year of his age.

Dr. Baker, died March 31st, 1823, in the 70th year of his age.

Samuel Stebbins, died March 27th, 1836, in the 74th year of his age.

And winter's blast, and summer's sultry heat,
And sinful snare—what are they now to him,
But dim-remembered sounds?
If 'twere so sweet
To have a son on earth, where every ill
Might launch a dart against his breast, and pierce
Your own through his, is it not doubly sweet
To have a son in Heaven?

L. H. Sigourney.

NOTE II.

Elizur Goodrich, D. D., and his Family.*

The following is extracted from the notes to Professor Fowler's sermon, which has been mentioned in a former part of this work:

"The Rev. Elizur Goodrich, D. D. the second pastor of the church in Durham, was a native of Stepney, since called Rocky Hill, a parish of Wethersfield, Conn., where he was born from a respectable line of ances-

* When I was in England in 1824, I visited Goodrich Castle, a few miles west of Ross, in the county of Hereford. In looking at the guide-book which I purchased at the place, it appeared that this edifice was of some historical celebrity, it having been founded by Godric, descendant of one of the landed proprietors recorded in King William's "Doomsday Book." The name Godric became changed at first to Goderic, then to Goodric, and finally to Goodrich, which it held in the time of Cromwell. The owner at that period, stimulated by the spirit as well as aided by the purse of a Catholic priest of the vicinity, opposed the measures of the usurper in such manner as to draw upon him his resentment. Cromwell marched in person against the castle, which he attacked, and after an obstinate defense, he having demolished a portion of the northern wall, it surrendered. From that time it had ceased to be inhabited, and I saw it as Cromwell left it, save only the dilapidation of time.

It would appear from the ancient history of the county of Hereford, that the family of Goodrich—variously spelled Godric, Goodric, Goodrich, Goderich—was formerly common in that quarter of England; but at the time I speak of, I was unable to hear of a single person in that region bearing the name. As to my own ancestors, it is believed that they came from Suffolk, perhaps in the vicinity of Bury St. Edmunds. There were two brothers, William and John Goodrich, who arrived in New England about 1630, and settled at Watertown, in Massachusetts; but in 1636, they removed to Wethersfield, Connecticut, where they continued to reside. From William Goodrich and his descendants, the name has been extensively spread over New England, and within the last thirty years over the Northwestern States.

One of the New England family removed, probably about a century ago, to Virginia, where he became a wealthy planter. A descendant of his, being a tory at the period of the revolution, went and settled in England. His descendants are now living in the county of Sussex. Other descendants of the New England emigrant to Virginia are still living in that State. The name is sometimes spelled Goodridge in this country; fifty years ago it was pronounced *Gutridge*.

My paternal grandfather was a descendant of the above-named William Goodrich, his father being David Goodrich of Wethersfield, parish of Rocky Hill. By the gravestone of the latter, it appears that he died in 1702, in his ninety-first year, having been forty-six years a deacon.

In "Goodwin's Genealogical Notes," among other notices of the Goodrich family I find the following:

Elizur Goodrich, D. D.

Elizur Goodrich, D. D., born October 18, 1734, settled in Durham, Connecticut,

tors, on the 18th of October, old style, 1734. He early evinced a strong love of letters; and so diligently did he pursue his cherished object, that at the early age of fourteen he entered as a member of Yale College. In 1755, on receiving his master's degree, he was elected a tutor in this institution. The ministry, however, being his chosen profession, he resigned the tutorship the following year, and on the 4th December, 1756, was ordained pastor of the church and congregation in Durham. Not long after his settlement, he became united in marriage with Catherine Chauncey, grand-daughter of his predecessor in the ministry at Durham. The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by the

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married Katharine, daughter of Hon. Elihu Chauncey, February 1, 1759; she was born April 11, 1741.

Rev. Elizur Goodrich, D. D., died November 21, 1797.

Mrs. Katharine Goodrich, died April 8, 1830.

Children.

1. Chauncey, born October 20, 1759. United States Senator, and Lieutenant-governor of Connecticut. Died August 18, 1815.
2. Elizur, born March 24, 1761.
3. Samuel, born January 12, 1763.
4. Elihu, born September 16, 1764. Died unmarried.
5. Charles Augustus, born March 2, 1768. Died unmarried.
6. Nathan, born August 5, 1770. Died young.
7. Catharine, born December 2, 1775. Married Rev. David Smith, D. D., of Durham, Conn. Died in 1845.

Elizur Goodrich, LL.D.

Hon. Elizur Goodrich, settled at New Haven, married Anne Willard Allen, only daughter of Daniel and Esther Allen, September 1, 1785.

Elizur Goodrich, died at New Haven, Conn., November 1, 1849.

Mrs. Anne Willard Goodrich, died November 17, 1818.

Children.

8. Elizur, born October 3, 1787. Married Eliza, daughter of Gen. Henry Champion, October 25, 1818; residence, Hartford.
9. Chauncey Allen, born October 28, 1790. Married Julia, daughter of Noah Webster, LL.D.
10. Nancy, born January 1, 1793. Married Hon. Henry L. Ellsworth. Died January 15, 1847.

Rev. Samuel Goodrich.

Samuel Goodrich married Elizabeth, daughter of Col. John Ely, July 29, 1784.

Rev. Samuel Goodrich died at Berlin, April 19, 1835.

Mrs. Elizabeth Goodrich died at Berlin, March 3, 1837.

Children.

11. Sarah Worthington, born August 7, 1785. Married, 1st, Amos Cooke; 2d, Hon. Frederick Wolcott. Died ——.
12. Elizabeth, born April 26, 1787. Married Rev. Noah Coe.

college of New Jersey. In 1776, he was chosen a member of the corporation of Yale College, and in the following year, on the occasion of an election to the presidency of that institution, consequent upon the resignation of President Daggett, he was a candidate for that office, as was also Dr. Styles. It is understood that there was a tie in the votes given for these two gentlemen, which coming to the knowledge of Dr. Goodrich, who had declined voting, he insisted upon the right to do so, thus turning the election in favor of Dr. Styles—an act of his life which ever after gave him pleasure, and which seemed to increase and perpetuate his regard for the institution.

"The death of Dr. Goodrich occurred in November, 1797, and was sudden and unexpected. On the 17th of that month, he left home for the purpose of examining some lands which belonged to Yale College, in the county of Litchfield. On the Sabbath following he preached at Litchfield, and on Monday proceeded to Norfolk, where he was entertained by the hospitable family of Capt. Titus Ives. At this time he was in the enjoyment of good health. The evening was spent in pleasant conversation. On the following morning he rose early, as was his custom: he had dressed himself, with the exception of putting on his coat, which he was evidently in the act of doing, proceeding during the same time toward the door, when he fell in an apoplectic fit, and expired, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, and the forty-first of his ministry. His remains were carried to Durham on the succeeding Saturday, and were followed to the grave by his family, the church and the congregation, and a numerous concourse of strangers. President Dwight, of Yale College, delivered a solemn and affecting discourse from Ecclesiastes ii. 1—'The righteous and the wise and their works are in the hands of God.'

"Dr. Goodrich may justly be numbered among the distinguished men of his times. He possessed powers of mind adapted to the investigation and comprehension of every subject to which he directed his attention. In classical learning he greatly excelled, and so perfect was his knowledge of the original languages of the Bible as to enable him to dispense with the English version. In the exact sciences, as well as in mental and moral philosophy, he was distinguished. No exercise gave him more pleasure than to sit down to the solution of some difficult prob-

13. Abigail, born November 29, 1788. Married Rev. Samuel Whittlesey.

14. Charles Augustus, August 19, 1790. Married Sarah Upson.

15. Catherine, born December 4, 1791. Married Daniel Dunbar, of Berlin.

16. Samuel Griswold, born August 19, 1793. Married, 1st, Adeline Gratia Bradley; 2d, Mary Boott.

17. Elihu Chauncey, born November 18, 1795. Died June 9, 1797.

18. Mary Ann, born May 29, 1799. Married Hon. N. B. Smith, of Woodbury.

19. Emily Chauncey, born November 25, 1801. Died October 22, 1803.

20. Emily Chauncey, born November 13, 1805. Married Rev. Darius Mead, died ——.

lem, as he was wont to do in his hours of leisure. Having the use of the valuable library of his predecessor, many of the works in which were written in Latin, he read extensively in that language. Divinity, however, was the great study of his life. He took large, comprehensive views of the doctrines of Christianity. He loved the Bible, and especially those truths which go to exalt and illustrate the grace of God. Salvation by a crucified Redeemer, without merit on the part of the sinner and the duties of the moral law, was the burden of his preaching. At the same time he occupied a commanding influence in the churches of Connecticut, as a friend and a counselor. In the language of President Dwight—'He was a man of unusual prudence, and of singular skill and experience in the concerns of congregations, churches, and ministers. His talents were not only great and distinguished, but they were also of the most useful kind, which we call practical. These eminently fitted him for the service of God and for usefulness among mankind, and in these respects he left a reputation which will be honored as long as his memory shall last.' Soon after his death a friend, who was well acquainted with him, thus truthfully and happily summed up his character: 'As a Christian divine, he was solid, judicious, and established with grace; equally free from the wildness of enthusiasm and the rigors of superstition. His reading was extensive; his memory tenacious; his piety substantial; his gravity commanding; *his profiting appeared unto all men, and his praise is in all the churches.* He was a wise counselor, a peace-maker, a friend and lover of his country and mankind.'

"Mrs. Goodrich survived her husband for many years, honored and beloved by a large circle of friends and relations. For the church and congregation of Durham she cherished the highest regard, and continued to receive from them the respect and affection to which, by her character, her love for them, and her example among them, she was eminently entitled. Her death occurred in the spring of 1830.

"As to the family of Dr. Goodrich, he left six children, five sons and a daughter, to mourn the loss of a parent whose character justly excited their veneration, and whose example they could, more than most others, safely imitate."

The following is abridged from Hollister's History of Connecticut, vol. ii. pp. 634–638:

"Chauncey Goodrich was the eldest son of the preceding, and was born on the 20th of October, 1779. After a career of great distinction at Yale College, where he spent nine years as a student, a Berkeley scholar, and a tutor, he was admitted to the bar at Hartford in the autumn of 1781.

"After serving in the State legislature for a single session, he was elected to Congress as a member of the House of Representatives, in

the year 1794. For this station he was peculiarly qualified, not only by the original bent of his mind and his habits of study, but also by the fact that an early marriage into the family of the second Governor Wolcott, had brought him into the closest relations with public men and measures, and made him investigate all the great questions of the day with profound interest and attention. His brother-in-law—afterward the third Governor Wolcott—held one of the highest offices under the general government. This led him, from the moment he took his seat in Congress, to become intimately acquainted with the plans and policy of the administration; and he gave them his warmest support, under the impulse alike of political principle and of personal feeling. A party in opposition to Gen. Washington was now organized for the first time in Congress, as the result of Mr. Jay's treaty with Great Britain. Mr. Goodrich took a large share in the debates which followed, and gained the respect of all parties by his characteristic dignity, candor, and force of judgment, and especially by his habit of contemplating a subject on every side, and discussing it in its remotest relations and dependencies. Mr. Albert Gallatin, then the most active leader of the opposition, remarked to a friend near the close of his life, that in these debates he usually selected the speech of Chauncey Goodrich as the object of reply—feeling that if he could answer him, he would have met every thing truly relevant to the subject which had been urged on the part of the government.

"In 1801, he resigned his seat in Congress, and returned to the practice of the law at Hartford. The next year he was chosen to the office of councilor in the State legislature, which he continued to fill down to 1807, when he was elected to the Senate of the United States. During the violent conflicts of the next six years, he took an active part in most of the discussions which arose out of the embargo, the non-intercourse laws, and the other measures which led to the war with Great Britain. The same qualities which marked his early efforts were now fully exhibited in the maturity of his powers, while the whole cast of his character made him peculiarly fitted for the calmer deliberations of the Senate. He had nothing of what Burke calls the 'smartness of debate.' He never indulged in sarcasm or personal attack. In the most stormy discussions, he maintained a courtesy which disarmed rudeness. No one ever suspected him of wishing to misrepresent an antagonist, or evade the force of an argument; and the manner in which he was treated on the floor of the Senate, shows how much can be done to conciliate one's political opponents, even in the worst times, by a uniform exhibition of high principle, if connected with a penetrating judgment and great reasoning powers. Mr. Jefferson playfully remarked to a friend during this period—'That white-headed Yankee from Connecticut is the most difficult man to deal with in the Senate of the United States.'

"In 1813, he was chosen lieutenant-governor of the State, and con-

tinued to hold this office until his death. At the meeting of the legislature in 1814, he was appointed a delegate to the celebrated Hartford Convention. Though in feeble health, he took a large share in the deliberations of that body, and especially in those healing measures which were finally adopted. During its session, he received communications from distinguished men in other States, touching the various questions at issue, and particularly from Mr. Daniel Webster, who had previously sent him an extended argument to show that the provisions of the embargo law, 'so far as it interdicts commerce between parts of the United States,' were unconstitutional and oppressive in the highest degree. Mr. John Randolph, also, addressed him under date of December 16, 1814, forwarding a pamphlet which he had just published against the administration, in the hope of promoting 'the welfare of the country in these disastrous times.' At an earlier period, Mr. Randolph had been one of the strongest political opponents of Mr. Goodrich; but he now says—'Unfeigned respect for your character and that of your native State, which like my own is not to be blown about by every idle breath—now hot, now cold—is the cause of your being troubled with this letter—a liberty for which I beg your excuse.' In reference to the Convention, he remarks—'I make every allowance for your provocations; but I trust that the "steady habits" of Connecticut will prevail in the Congress at Hartford, and that she will be the preserver of the Union from the dangers by which it is threatened from the administration of the general government, whose wickedness is only surpassed by its imbecility.'

"Early in 1815, it was found that a hidden disease under which Mr. Goodrich had for some time labored, was an affection of the heart. His death was probably near—it would unquestionably be sudden—it might occur at any moment! He received the intelligence with calmness, but with deep emotion. He expressed his feelings without reserve to his pastor, the Rev. Dr. Strong, and at a later period to the writer of this sketch. From his youth, he had been a firm believer in the divine authority of the Scriptures. He read them habitually even in the busiest scenes of his life. So highly did he prize public worship, that he once remarked, he would attend on preaching of a very low intellectual order—which was even repulsive to his taste, and that he always did so, if he could find no better, when away from home—rather than be absent from the house of God. As the result of all his studies and reflections, he had become more and more fixed in his belief of those great doctrines of grace, which had been taught him by his father, and which are generally received in the churches of Connecticut. His life had, indeed, been spotless, and devoted to the service of his country. But in speaking of our ground of acceptance before God, he said in substance—'A moral life is of itself nothing for the salvation of the soul. I have lived a moral life in the estimation of the world; but no language can express my sense of its deficiency in the sight of a holy

God. If there was not an atonement, I must be condemned and miserable forever. Here my hope is stayed. A sense of imperfection often sinks my spirits, but generally I have a hope that supports me, and at times I have rejoiced in God without fear, and have wished only to be in his hands and employed in his service.' In this state of mind his summons found him. On the 18th of August, 1815, in the midst of the family circle, while walking the room and engaged in cheerful conversation, he faltered for a moment, sank into a chair, and instantly expired, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

"In his person, Mr. Goodrich was a little above the medium height, of a full habit, slightly inclining to corpulency. He had finely turned features, with prominent and rounded cheeks, and a remarkable purity of complexion, which retained throughout life the flush of early youth. His countenance was singularly expressive, showing all the varied emotions of his mind when excited by conversation or by public speaking. His eye was blue, and deep-sunk under an ample forehead. He had the habit of fixing it intently upon those to whom he spoke in earnest conversation, and no one who has felt that look, will ever forget its searching and subduing power.

"In domestic and social life, he was distinguished for his gentleness and urbanity. He had a delicacy of feeling which was almost feminine. A friend who had conversed with him intimately for many years, remarked that he had one peculiarity which was strikingly characteristic: 'Not a sentiment or expression ever fell from his lips in the most unguarded moment, which might not have been uttered in the most refined circles of female society.' He had, at times, a vein of humor, which shows itself in his familiar letters to Oliver Wolcott and others, as published by Mr. Gibbs, in his 'Memoirs of the Administration of Washington and John Adams.' But, in general, his mind was occupied with weighty thoughts, and it was perhaps this, as much as any thing, that gave him a dignity of manner which was wholly unassumed, and which, without at all lessening the freedom of social intercourse, made every one feel that he was not a man with whom liberties could be taken. He could play with a subject, when he chose, in a desultory manner, but he preferred, like Johnson, to 'converse rather than talk.' He loved of all things to unite with others in following out trains of thought. The late Judge Hopkinson, of Philadelphia, in a letter to Mr. Gibbs, classes him in this respect with Oliver Ellsworth, Fisher Ames, Uriah Tracy, Oliver Wolcott, and Roger Griswold: of whom he says, 'You may well imagine what a rich and intellectual society it was. I will not say that we have no such men now, but I don't know where to find them.'

"His crowning characteristic, that of integrity and honor, was thus referred to a few days after his death, by a writer in one of the leading journals of Hartford. 'His judgment was so guided by rectitude, that of all men living he was, perhaps, the only one to whom his worst ene-

my—if enemy he had—*would have confided the decision of a controversy, sooner than to his best friend.*'"

Elizur Goodrich, LL.D., the second son, was born 24th of March, 1761. In the year 1775, he entered Yale College, at the age of fourteen. During his senior year, his life was brought into extreme danger at the time when New Haven was attacked by the British. On the landing of the troops, July 5th, 1779, he joined a company of about a hundred in number, who went out, under the command of James Hillhouse, to annoy and retard the march of the enemy: toward evening, when the town was taken and given up to ravage and plunder, he was stabbed near the heart by a British soldier, as he lay on his bed in a state of extreme exhaustion, and barely escaped with his life.

Having been fitted for the bar, he established himself at New Haven, and soon acquired an extensive practice. In 1795, he was elected a representative to the State legislature, and in 1799, a member of Congress. This station he resigned, and was appointed Collector of the port of New Haven, and was soon after removed by Mr. Jefferson to give place to Deacon Bishop, as elsewhere related (vol. i. page 122). He was immediately elected to the State legislature, and then to the council. His habits of mind fitted him peculiarly for the duties of a legislative body. He had great industry, clearness of judgment, and accuracy of knowledge in the details of business. He was much relied on in drafting new laws, as one who had been long conversant with the subject, and had gained a perfect command of those precise and definite forms of expression which are especially important in such a case. He was, also, judge of the County Court for the county of New Haven thirteen years, and judge of Probate for the same county seventeen years, down to the change of politics in 1818. In the latter office, he endeared himself greatly to numerous families throughout the county, by his judgment and kindness in promoting the settlement of estates without litigation, and by his care in providing for the interests of widows and orphans. He was also mayor of the city of New Haven, from September, 1803, to June, 1822, being a period of nineteen years, when he declined any longer continuance in this office. For nine years he was Professor of Law at Yale College, and repeatedly delivered courses of lectures on the laws of nature and nations, but resigned the office in 1810, as interfering too much with his other public duties. His interest in the college, however, remained unabated. For many years he was a leading member of the corpora-

tion, and was particularly charged with its interests as a member of the prudential committee; and was secretary of the board for the period of twenty-eight years, until he tendered his resignation in 1846. It is a striking circumstance, that from the time of his entering college in 1775, he was uninterruptedly connected with the institution, either as a student, Berkeley scholar, tutor, assistant to the treasurer, professor, member of the corporation, or secretary of the board, for the space of *seventy-one years!* He received from the college the honorary degree of LL.D., in the year 1830. His death took place in 1849.

After what has been said, it is unnecessary to give any labored delineation of Mr. Goodrich's character. He was distinguished for the clearness and strength of his judgment, the ease and accuracy with which he transacted business, and the kindness and affability which he uniformly manifested in all the relations of life. His reading was extensive and minute; and, what is not very common in public men, he kept up his acquaintance with the ancient classics to the last, being accustomed to read the writings of Cicero, Livy, Sallust, Virgil, and Horace, down to the eighty-ninth year of his age, with all the ease and interest of his early days. He professed the religion of Christ soon after leaving college, adorned his profession by a consistent life, and experienced the consolations and hopes which it affords, in the hour of dissolution.

The following is copied from Professor Fowler's Notes, already mentioned:

Samuel Goodrich, the third son, was born on the 12th of January, 1763. He graduated at Yale, in 1788, and after a course of theological study, was ordained at Ridgefield, Conn., on the 6th of July, 1786. Under his pastoral care the church and society of Ridgefield flourished, and he became an instrument of extensive good. He was often called to aid in the settlement of ecclesiastical difficulties, for which he was peculiarly fitted by his extensive knowledge of mankind, and by his plain practical sense. On the 22d of January, 1811, he was dismissed from his charge at Ridgefield, at his own request, and on the 29th of May following he was installed at Worthington, a parish of Berlin.

In 1784, Mr. Goodrich married Elizabeth Ely, daughter of Col. John Ely of Saybrook. She survived him about two years. Their children were ten in number. For several years Mr. Goodrich had been occasionally afflicted with gout, which in its attacks were more frequent and more serious as he advanced in life. His last sickness

was short, and as the disease early affected his brain, he was favored with but few lucid intervals. But during these he manifested a full knowledge of his danger, and a willingness to depart. A short period before his death, he revived so considerably as to distinguish his friends, and to express his strong confidence in God. "My soul," said he, "is on the Rock of Ages, and my confidence in God is as firm as the everlasting mountains. Yet," he continued, after a short pause, "in myself I am a poor creature." On Sabbath evening, April 19th, 1835, he expired.

Mr. Goodrich lived and died a Christian. As a pastor he was greatly beloved; as a minister of Jesus Christ he was eminently successful. Several seasons of revival occurred under his ministry, both during his residence at Ridgefield and Worthington. Many still live to whom he was a spiritual father, and who cherish his memory as "a good man," and a kind and faithful shepherd. In the language of one who knew him well—"He possessed many excellent qualities as a man and a minister. His judgment was accurate, being founded on an extensive acquaintance with men and manners, and a long study of the human heart. He readily discerned the springs of action, and knew well how to approach his fellow-men in regard to objects which he wished to accomplish. He did not misjudge in respect to means or ends. He was remarkable for his practical good sense, and an acquaintance with common and therefore useful things. His understanding was rather solid than brilliant, and his knowledge seemed to be in wide and diversified surveys, and was gathered from many a field, rather than contracted to a point, or derived from prolonged investigation of particular subjects. Hence his sermons were plain, instructive exhibitions of truth, and shared his varied information and practical good sense." During the last years of his life he preached with increased fervency, spirit, and solemnity.

How highly he prized the scriptures may be gathered from a memorandum in his family Bible, as follows: "1806, began to read the Bible in course in the family, and completed it the thirteenth time, October 29, 1833." The years are specified in which he each time completed the reading: "1809, 1812, 1814, 1816, 1821, 1823, 1825, 1827, 1828, 1830, 1832, 1833." Such a man we might well expect to hear say, as he said on the eve of his departure—adopting the language of the Psalmist—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Elihu Chauncey Goodrich, Esq.—a name derived from his maternal grandfather—was the fourth child of Dr. Goodrich, and was born September 16th, 1764. He also received his education at Yale College, from which institution he graduated in 1784, with the reputation of a sound scholar. He devoted himself to the profession of law, engaging at times, as interest and inclination prompted, in the purchase and sale of western lands. His residence was at Claverack, New York. His death occurred in 1802, and was occasioned by fever induced by injudiciously bathing, during an excursion on the western lakes. He was never married.

Charles Augustus Goodrich, the fifth son, was born March 2d, 1758. Like his brothers, he was educated at Yale, and took his bachelor's degree in 1786. In constitution he was less vigorous than the other sons, but to a fine taste and poetical genius he united a disposition the most affectionate, and manners the most persuasive. Before leaving college he had chosen the ministry as a profession, for which he was well fitted, both on account of his piety, his love of learning, and the native kindness of his heart. Soon after, however, and by reason of too close application to study, his nervous system became seriously affected, and which in a few months induced a permanent derangement of his mental powers. His death occurred in 1804.

Catherine Chauncey Goodrich was born December 2, 1775, and died A. D. 1845, in the seventieth year of her age. She married Rev. David Smith, D. D., who succeeded to her father's pulpit, as has been elsewhere stated.

NOTE III.

*Col. John Ely and Family.**

Col. John Ely, son of Daniel Ely, was a native of Lyme, Conn., and born in 1737. He devoted himself to the practice of medicine, and speedily became eminent. He was particularly success-

* Richard Ely, a widower, the first of the family who came to this country, emigrated from Plymouth, England, about 1660 or 1670, accompanied by his youngest son Richard, and settled in Lyme, Connecticut. Daniel Ely, father of Col. Ely, was married four times, and had thirteen children, as follows: Mary, who married

ful in the treatment of small-pox, and he erected several buildings for the reception of patients to receive inoculation for that disease. Two of these, constituting a regular hospital, were upon Duck Island, which lies off the shore of the village of Westport, where he established himself in practice. He married Sarah, daughter of Rev. Mr. Worthington of this village, then a parish of Saybrook, and bearing the name of Pachoug. He had a decided military turn, and engaged with patriotic ardor in the revolutionary struggle. As early as 1775, he mustered and marched with a company of militia to Roxbury, under his command. In 1776, he performed a tour of duty at Fort Trumbull, New London, as major, also officiating as physician and surgeon. Among the few of his papers which remain, I find a copy of a pithy letter, which he sent, as commandant of the fort, to a suspicious ship, lying at anchor at the mouth of the harbor; in consequence—as is said in a note—"she disappeared, and we hope to see her no more." "In July, he was sent to visit the northern army, and employ his skill in arresting the small-pox, which was then raging in the camp with great virulence."* In 1777 he was again the commandant of Fort Trumbull, with the rank of colonel, his regiment having been raised by his own exertions, and many of the men having been fitted out with his own money. He was at this time wealthy, and the country was poor, and with the liberality of his nature he devoted not only his services but his means to the cause which filled his breast.

His subsequent military career may be told in the report of the committee on revolutionary claims in the House of Representatives, January 23, 1833:

"Colonel Ely, at the commencement of the Revolutionary war, was a physician of great celebrity, residing at the town of Saybrook, in the State of Connecticut; that, in the early stages of the conflict, he abandoned his profession, and raised a regiment of regular troops, and was commissioned as a colonel; and, at the head of his regiment, he entered into the service of his country.

Benj. Lee; Ann, married Benj. Harris; Elizabeth, married Abram Perkins; Daniel, married Abigail Dennison; Sarah, Ruth; Wells, married Elizabeth Williams and Rebecca Selden; John, noticed above; Amy, married Ezra Selden; Lucretia, married Benj. Colt, from whom descended Samuel Colt of Hartford, renowned for the invention of the revolver, and the late Dudley Selden of New York; Christopher, who married successively Eve Marvin, Esther Hunt, and —— Elliot; and Elisha, who married Susanna Bloomer. (*See Genealogical Table of the Lee Family, by Rev. W. H. Hill, Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., Printers.*)

* Caulkins' History of New London, p 520.

"On the 9th of December, 1777, he was captured by the enemy, and became a prisoner of war, and was paroled at Flatbush, on Long Island, where were also, prisoners, several hundred American officers. Among these officers a distressing sickness prevailed, and Col. Ely, from the humanity that belonged to his character, from the day of his captivity to the day of his exchange, faithfully and exclusively devoted his time and attention to them as a physician. In discharging this duty, he encountered great hardship and much expense, as the residences of the sick officers were scattered over a considerable space of country, many of them being as much as twenty miles apart. Col. Ely, when unable from bodily infirmity or the state of the weather, to perform his long tours on foot, hired a horse at an extravagant price, and paid the cost out of his own private means. He was also frequently compelled to purchase medicine for the sick at his own cost.

"Soon after he became a prisoner, his son, Captain Ely, in conjunction with other friends, fitted out, at their own expense, a vessel, and manned her, for the purpose of surprising and capturing a British force, with which to effect the exchange of Col. Ely. The object of the expedition succeeded, so far as regarded the surprise and capture of the enemy, and the prisoners were delivered to the proper authorities, to be exchanged for Col. Ely. This, however, was not done, by reason of the earnest entreaties of the sick American officers, who considered their lives as greatly depending upon the continuance, attendance, and skill of Col. Ely. He was induced to forego his right to an exchange, and consented to remain, for the comfort and safety of his sick brother officers. It appears, from a certificate of Samuel Huntington, President of Congress, that still, subsequent to the time when his exchange might have been effected, through the valor of his son and friends; and when he became entitled to an exchange, by the regular rule, that a deputation of exchanged officers, who had been his fellow-prisoners, was appointed to wait on Congress, by the sick officers who still remained in captivity, and to urge the continuance of Col. Ely as their physician and surgeon. At the head of this deputation was Col. Matthews (since a member of Congress, and Governor of Georgia), and Col. Ramsay, of the Maryland line. Col. Ely was, in consequence of this representation, not exchanged, although entitled to an exchange. He remained, and acted as physician and surgeon till the 25th of December, 1780, when he was released—a period of more than three years."

On his final return to his family, early in the year 1781, Col. Ely found himself broken in health and constitution, his lands run to waste, his house in a state of dilapidation, his property dissipated, and a considerable debt accumulated against him. With good courage, however, he set himself again to his profession. He rose in the morning early, cut his wood, carried it in, built his fires, fed the

cattle, and then went forth upon his professional duties. In those days of depression, the great staple of the family for food was hasty pudding—Col. Ely cheering his wife by saying that the children of the poor were always the healthiest, because of the simplicity of their food. By these efforts and sacrifices he partially recovered from his difficulties. His health, however, gradually gave way; and when the country had risen from the chaos of the war under the new constitution, he, with others, applied to Congress for remuneration for his extraordinary services. Gen. Knox, then Secretary of War, made a highly favorable report, and the House of Representatives immediately adopted it by passing a bill in favor of Col. Ely, granting him twenty thousand dollars. He was at Philadelphia at this time, and wrote to his daughter at Ridgefield that in a few days he should be able to give her the marriage outfit which his poverty had hitherto prevented him from doing. Not doubting that the Senate would ratify the action of the House, he returned to his family.

In a short time he received the mortifying intelligence that his claim had been thrown out by the Senate. Oliver Ellsworth, a man of great pertinacity of character as well as wisdom in the conduct of affairs, had acquired immense influence in that body—it being said by Aaron Burr that if he should chance to spell the name of the Deity with two *ds*, it would take the Senate three weeks to expunge the superfluous letter! He was generally opposed to money grants, from a just anxiety as to the means of the government, and hence was called the "Cerberus of the treasury." This formidable senator opposed the bill in Col. Ely's favor, and it was consequently defeated.

Sick at heart, borne down with a sense of neglect, if not injustice, the more keenly felt because he had sacrificed his fortune and his health in the most generous manner for his country; indignant at the refusal of compensation for his extraordinary services, promised by letters from Washington addressed personally to himself, and placed before Congress, he turned his back upon the hope of further success in life, and after a few years—October, 1800—he was numbered with the dead. About forty years later, the heirs of Col. Ely presented his claims to Congress, and they were readily recognized. Most of his papers, however, had been lost, and only a small portion of his claim—about five thousand dollars—was allowed.

The character of Col. Ely may be inferred from what has already been said. In person he was tall, erect, and of a manner marked with dignity and ease. In conversation he was lively, full

of wit, and abounding in illustrative anecdote. As a commander, he was the idol of the soldiery, and uniting to his military office the skill and practice of the physician, with a tenderness of humanity which knew no weariness, he acquired a degree of love and friendship which few men ever enjoy. It is painful to reflect that it was owing to these amiable traits of character, and to the confidence and affection they inspired, that his days were shortened and the latter part of his life darkened with comparative poverty and gloom. It was in consequence of the earnest solicitations and representations of the invalid soldiers and officers that remained in captivity on Long Island, and who felt that they could not part with his services, that he was induced to forego his privilege of restoration to his family, and continue on in captivity—and that too after his son, a youth of twenty years of age, by his enterprise, had provided the means of deliverance—devoting himself to arduous duties, which finally resulted in breaking down his vigorous constitution and his elastic spirit.

A friend has furnished me with the following notice of my great-grandfather on my mother's side, and the progenitor of some of the leading families in Connecticut:

"Rev. William Worthington was the son of William Worthington, first of Hartford and then of Colchester, Conn., and grandson of Nicholas Worthington, the emigrant ancestor, probably, of all who bear the name of Worthington in the United States. The last resided in Liverpool, England, where he was a great farmer. He was wounded in the Cromwellian wars, lost a part or all of his estate by confiscation, and came to this country about 1650. He settled first in Hatfield, Mass., and afterward removed to Hartford, Conn.

"Rev. William Worthington was born, probably in Colchester, Dec. 5, 1695. He graduated at Yale College in 1716, preached for a time in Stonington, Conn., and was settled in Saybrook, west parish, then called Pachoug, in 1726. He was the first minister of the parish, and was ordained in the dwelling-house built for himself, but then unfinished, the people sitting on the beams and timbers to witness the ceremony. He died Nov. 16, 1756, in the sixty-first year of his age, in the language on his gravestone, 'much lamented by all who were happy in his acquaintance.' He was a popular preacher and a most faithful pastor. His influence was eminently persuasive to love and good works, and was long visible after his death, in the religious character of his people, and in the tone of feeling prevalent in the business and courtesies of life. He preached the election sermon in the year 1744. The following is the title-page: 'The Duty of Rulers and Teachers in unitedly leading God's People, urged and explained in a Sermon preached,

before the General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on their Anniversary Election, May 10th, 1744.'

"The sermon is a logical and well-written discourse. In his social and ministerial intercourse, he was a gentleman of great blandness, gracefulness, and urbanity of manner—attributes which he transmitted to many of his descendants. Some of his people said that they had but one thing against him, and that was, 'he walked as if he were a proud man.' But Mr. Lay, one of his parishioners, seeing him walking in the woods, and supposing himself alone, with the same dignity and gracefulness of bearing as when in the presence of others, came to the conclusion that his 'manner in public was natural to him.'

"His four daughters were celebrated in their day for their accomplishments. The traditions of their superiority of air, manner, and appearance, still linger among the old people of Westport. Their father's mode of educating them was to keep one of them, in succession, at domestic employments with their mother, while the others were at their studies with himself.

"The following is told among the legends of the family. Mr. Worthington had a slave named Jenny. After his death she lived with his children, one after another. When she died, it was ninety years from the time that the first bill of sale was given. She had two children in Guinea before she came to this country, and must therefore have been considerably over a hundred years old. When she was on her death-bed, at Mr. Elnathan Chauncey's, in Durham, Dr. Goodrich conversed with her. 'Jenny has strange notions,' said he, when he came out of the room. 'She said to me, "I shall go to heaven. I shall knock at the door, and ask for Massa Worthington; and he will go and tell God that I had always been an honest, faithful servant, and then he will let me in, and I will go and sit in the kitchen."'

"Mr. Worthington's first wife was Nancy Mason, the second Temperance Gallup. The children of Mr. Worthington were—

I. Mary, who married Col. Aaron Elliot, of Killingworth. Her children were, 1. Dr. William Elliot, of Goshen, N. Y.; 2. Dr. Aaron Elliot, who removed to St. Genevieve, La.; 3. Mary, who married a Mr. Ely, of Lyme. Sybil, who died young. Elizabeth, who was the oldest daughter by his second wife: she married Col. Samuel Gale, of Goshen, N. Y., for her first husband, and Rev. Elnathan Chauncey, of Durham, Connecticut, for her second husband. By her first husband she had—1. Asa Worthington Gale; 2. Benjamin Gale. By her second husband she had—1. Nathaniel William Chauncey; 2. Catharine Chauncey, who married Reuben Rose Fowler; 3. Worthington G. Chauncey.

"II. Sarah, who was married to Col. John Ely, of the army of the Revolution. Her children were—1. Ethlinda, who married her half-cousin, Dr. William Elliot, who settled at Goshen, N. Y.; 2. Worthington, who graduated at Yale College in 1780, and who was a physi-

cian at New Baltimore, on the Hudson, and the grandfather of the present Mrs. Recorder Smith, of the city of New York, Mrs. Waddell, &c.; 3. Betsey, who married the Rev. Samuel Goodrich, of Berlin, Conn.; 4. Amy, who married Dr. Cowles; 5. John, a physician, and member of Congress, established at Coxsackie; 6. Edward, a lawyer, settled at Goshen, N. Y.; 7. Lucretia, who married Dr. Gregory of Sand Lake, near Albany.

"III. Temperance, who was married first to Moses Gale, of Goshen, N. Y., and afterward to Rev. Samuel Mather Smith. She had one son, named William, by her first husband, and she had by her second husband, John Cotton Smith, who was governor of Connecticut; a daughter, who married Judge Radcliff, of New York; another daughter, who married the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Stamford, Conn.; and another daughter, who married Mr. Wheeler.

"IV. Mehitabel, who married Michael Hopkins. Her children were—1. George, a well-known printer and publisher; 2. Stephen Augustus, who removed to Richmond, Va.; 3. Silvia, who was a celebrated beauty; 4. Belinda.

"V. William, who was a colonel in the army of the Revolution."

NOTE IV.

The Clergy of Fairfield County.

Rev. Amzi Lewis, D. D., son of Deacon Samuel Lewis, of Naugatuck, graduated at Yale College, 1768, settled at Horseneck, and died in 1819.

Rev. Justus Mitchell* settled at New Canaan, and died in 1808.

Rev. Matthias Burnet, D. D., was installed over the First Congregational Church of Norwalk, 1785, died 1806, aged fifty-eight.

Rev. Elijah Waterman was graduated at Yale in 1791, ordained at Windham in 1794, installed at Bridgeport in 1806, and died in 1825, aged fifty-six.

Rev. Roswell Swan, settled over the First Congregational Church in Norwalk, 1807, died 1819, in the forty-first year of his age.

Heman Humphries, D. D., was born in Simsbury, Conn., March

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* The Mitchell family were originally from Scotland, and settled afterward in Yorkshire. Matthew Mitchell, the ancestor of the Mitchells of this county, was born in 1590. He emigrated to America in 1635, and finally settled at Stamford, where he died, 1645. See Cothren's Ancient Woodbury, p. 633.

26, 1779; he was brought up in West Britain, now Burlington, under the preaching of the Rev. Jonathan Miller, and was received into his church when about twenty years of age. He had few early advantages of education, but he mastered all difficulties, and by his own efforts passed through Yale College, graduating in 1805. He studied divinity, and was settled at Fairfield in 1807. Being dismissed, at his own request, in 1817, he was settled at Pittsfield in the autumn of the same year. In 1823 he became president of Amherst College. In 1845 he resigned this situation, and has since made Pittsfield his residence. Enjoying excellent health and a wide fame, he has devoted his time and attention to the promotion of good and useful objects, chiefly of a religious nature.

Rev. Jonathan Bartlett is son of Rev. Jonathan Bartlett, who was settled over the church in Reading, March 21st, 1733. He succeeded his father, being first ordained and installed as his colleague in 1796. In a recent letter to me he says: "I can truly say that they—the clergymen of the Association of 'Fairfield West'—were all, not only in my own, but in the general estimation, highly respectable as men, and some of them were considered as possessed of uncommon abilities."

NOTE V.

Revival of Education.

J. G. Carter,* of Lancaster, Mass., was one of the first and most efficient of the promoters of the revival of education in New England, which commenced about thirty years ago. He began to write upon the subject as early as 1821, and from that time, for about twenty years, he devoted his attention with great energy to this object. He published various pamphlets, written with vigor, in behalf of the necessity of better text-books, the more vigorous administration of schools, and the thorough training of teachers. He laid open the philosophy of teaching with great ability, and was in fact a pioneer in the path of progress and improvement which has since been so happily followed. He promoted the lyceums founded

* Mr. Carter was a native of Leominster, Mass.; born Sept. 7, 1795, graduated at Harvard, settled at Lancaster, and died July 22, 1849.

by the indefatigable Josiah Holbrook, and in 1830, delivered two addresses before the American Institute of Instruction, of which he was an active promoter—one on the "Education of the Faculties," and another on the "Necessity of Educating Teachers." In 1835, chiefly through his influence, he being then a member of the legislature of Massachusetts, a grant of three hundred dollars a year was made by the State to that excellent institution, and which has since been continued. In 1837 Mr. Carter, still being a member of the legislature, was chiefly instrumental in causing an act to be passed constituting the Board of Education, which has since been the source of so much good in rousing the public throughout the whole country, to the importance of the extension and improvement of education.

Of the Board of Education, thus constituted, Horace Mann became the secretary, and by his eloquence contributed to stimulate into life the good seed that had been sown. Rev. Charles Brooks, of Hingham, devoted himself with great zeal and success to the founding of normal schools, and to him Massachusetts is largely indebted for her excellent institutions of this nature.

Henry Barnard, of Connecticut, has devoted his life to the promotion of education, and has contributed more than any other person in the United States to give consistency and permanence to the efforts of enlightened men in behalf of this great cause. He is eminently practical, and at the same time by his various writings, he has largely diffused among all classes, true views of the nature and necessity of thorough instruction, especially in a country where the political institutions rest upon the people.

Among other early and efficient promoters of the movement which has resulted in the present enlightened state of public opinion on the subject of education, were Thomas H. Gallaudet, William C. Woodbridge, A. B. Alcott, W. A. Alcott, George B. Emerson, D. P. Page, Josiah Holbrook, Ebenezer Bailey, Gideon F. Thayer, Warren Colburn, Francis Wayland, William Russell, Rev. Samuel J. May Rev. George Putnam, and indeed many others.

The "Journal of Education" was founded in 1825 by Thomas B. Waite, of Boston, originally a printer, but then a publisher—a son of a member of the firm of Lilly, Waite & Co. In 1828 it came into my hands, Mr. W. Russell being its editor, but I parted with it after about a year.

It is to be remarked that many of the leading men of Massachusetts have readily lent their aid to the cause of education; among whom we may specially mention Daniel Webster, J. Q. Adams, Rob-

ert Rantoul, Jr., Edward Everett, Levi Lincoln, John Davis, &c. &c., all being convinced of the supreme importance of the subject, and desirous of lending their influence to enforce it upon the attention of the people.

Among the benefactors of special education, we may mention Thomas Handyside Perkins, of Boston, "a merchant who accumulated a princely fortune, and whose heart was still larger than his wealth," and who, aided by the skillful labors of Dr. Howe, was the chief founder of the Massachusetts Institution for the Blind. Abbott Lawrence, who rose by means of his fine person, his agreeable manners, his liberal feelings, and his strong practical sense, not only to great wealth, but to high social and political consideration, was a most munificent benefactor of various educational establishments. His two brothers, Amos and William, followed his noble example, and the public appreciation of their conduct may, it is hoped, lead others to devote a portion of their surplus wealth to the beneficent cause of general or special education.

END OF VOL. I.

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1. KEEP YOUR CARD in this pocket.
2. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for all loans and for all fines charged to you.
3. YOU MAY KEEP
   One week books — 7 calendar days.